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E. MORRIS FERGUSSON, A.M., D.D.

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Historic Chapters In Christian Education In America

A Brief History of the American Sunday School
Movement, and the Rise of the Modern
Church School

By
E. MORRIS FERGUSON



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To
MARY HUBER FERGUSSON
Fellow-secretary
Partner
Inspiration

PREFACE

STARTING with the English beginnings, this story of the Sunday School, from a North American viewpoint, follows in Part I the developing movement for Sunday School promotion and direction and in Part II, the evolution of Sunday School method from the early crudities to the standardized church school of modern days. Both parts show heroic endeavor, dramatic struggle, and the pursuit of ever-advancing ideals. It is in truth the story of a cause.

It starts with Raikes and his work at Gloucester. Earlier efforts belong in a history of religious education. In most cases these anticipations of the Sunday School constitute some unwonted performance by the church, through its clergy, of its acknowledged educational task; whereas the Sunday School was, and for the most part remains, essentially a lay enterprise, which the church accepted with some reluctance, and which even today it seldom recognizes to the extent of providing financial support.

In tracing the development of Sunday School method the aim has been to find and tell the origin of each specific feature of the Sunday School and its extensions, without attempting to write that feature's later story. Some of these well deserve books of their own. I have sought to present the significant details in due proportion, with constant reference to the unity and progress of the movement as a whole.

For the last forty-five years of the story I have written as a witness and participant in many of the episodes described. In so doing I may have failed to do justice to persons, phases, and relationships outside

the circle of my personal observation and acquaintance. Other regrettable errors and omissions will undoubtedly also appear.

The book was begun as a series of lectures to the theological students of Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. They were given in February, 1931, on the gracious invitation of President Arlo Ayres Brown, himself a historian of religious education. Two of them were later given at the theological seminary in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The material has since been recast and much extended.

To the friends, too many to name, whose responses to inquiries have enlarged my knowledge and corrected my misapprehensions, I return sincere thanks. Tribute is likewise due to the memory of three dear friends, Dr. Christopher R. Blackall, William J. Semelroth, and Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes, from whose collections of historical records my own has been generously enriched. The well-kept archives of the American Sunday School Union in Philadelphia have been freely opened to me by the Treasurer, Mr. John R. Talley, whose courtesy has continued that of my long-time friend, the late Dr. Edwin W. Rice.

Long is the list of leaders and comrades in the cause, now passed on, through whose fellowship I have been enabled to assemble the records and memories on which the latter part of this story is mainly based. Earliest of these was my friend, employer, and preceptor, Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull. To him I owe many lessons of highest value, a life interest in the Sunday School cause, and a vivid conversational introduction to its history throughout the generation preceding my own.

E. M. F.

Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

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PART I

THE AMERICAN
SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

I

PROMOTION BY UNION

THE story of the Sunday School, including its later unfolding into the church school, forms part of the history of religious education. In that history the Sunday School's place is large, significant, practical, and challenging.

It is *large*, because for the earlier centuries of religious education there is less to tell, and interest in agencies contemporary with the Sunday School is not so general. It is *significant*, because it was from the Sunday Schools of the last generation that the churches have advanced to their church schools of today. It is *practical*, because the story is replete with experiences which illuminate present problems and suggest for these the wisest solution. It is *challenging*, because, as we shall see, it is the story of a militant and heroic cause, whose essential issues are still faced, and whose struggles and victories must be matched with like enterprise, determination, and valor, if advance is to continue, and if faith is to be kept with our divine Chief.

The Sunday School history has two sides. Externally, it relates the successive phases of a more or less unified movement which began with the philanthropic labors of Robert Raikes. Internally, it tells of that progress in method by which the Sunday School's scope was enlarged, its administration improved, and its curriculum steadily rebuilt. Back of these phases can be discerned

a series of ideals, mostly unconscious, which have impelled leaders to new endeavor, united vast constituencies in loyalty to some supposed essential, and through their inevitable clashes made the story dramatic and lent to it an epic meaning.

This book follows first the course of the Sunday School movement as it started in England, took root on American soil, and there developed its agencies of centralized promotion. The parallel story of the development of method is followed in Part II. Ideals are studied and interpreted as these appear.

The central agencies of the original movement and its American extension have been of three types, which may be characterized respectively as the union, the association, and the council. Each type has grown out of the conditions it had to face; and each has been admirable in and for its appropriate situation. Under a simple formula, figured in four terms, A, B, C, and D, can be set forth an outline of the movement story which Part I is to trace.

The Sunday School Union, usually, but not always, called by that name, connotes a social cleavage, with a lower class or a needy field on the one side and a body of well-wishers on the other. A, the able, and B, the beneficent, form a union to help C, the castaways, the common people, the cut-off. In England, with its vestiges and inherited folkways of feudalism, this union conception of Sunday School organization has always ruled. Sunday Schools and local auxiliary unions are conceived of as branches of their parent union, to which they belong, and from which, ordinarily, their needs are met. In America, during the early decades of Sunday School history, an organization of this type met the situation. But with the growth of population, institutions, and democratic ideals, its paternal features, never conspicuous, sank from view; its plan of organization was steadily outgrown; and the association came in.

Under the association plan A, B, and C, the helpers and the helped came together on a level. They formed a loose organization for mutual service and for the extension of like service to others by means of conventions and field work. Their organizations multiplied and extended till the association became, first, national and then continental and assumed full leadership of the Sunday School cause.

There was however a fourth factor. D, the denominationalist, was wakened from educational slumber by the early activities of A and B and found himself challenged in interests and privileges by some of these activities, and later by the further activities of A, B, and C united as an aggressive international corporation. He started work of his own for his children and for all of C whom he could reach. In vigorous competition with his predecessors he endeavored to outdo their successes, utilizing and adapting their methods and the products of their associated effort, and in time forming a new association of all the D's for coöperative action. So effective grew D's service, and so unequal did the field prove to the burden and the scandal of the ill-disguised warfare that ensued, that hostilities were at length composed by formation and installation of the third type of organization, the council. Under this plan A, B, and C of the first part and D, D₁, D₂, and the others of the second part, pooling their diverse resources and ideals, agreed to unite on a friendly and equal footing for the common service of what had now become the church school. The original union of A and B faithfully continued its beneficent labors for C; its early leadership of the common cause gradually passing into other hands. Such is the outline which this story is to fill.

As a social invention, the Sunday School was announced to the reading public of Great Britain through the publication, in June, 1784, of the letter of Robert Raikes to Colonel Townley in the pages of the *Gentle-*

man's Magazine.¹ A Baptist deacon in London, William Fox, who had already with his own money established a weekday school for the poor, wrote Raikes to assure himself that children taught only one day in seven could really learn to read. That doubt cleared up, he moved to start a union which he called a society, to plant Sunday Schools of the Raikes type. On September 7, 1785, Fox, together with Jonas Hanway and others of like mind, formed what was popularly called "The Sunday School Society," to establish and support Sunday Schools in the kingdom of Great Britain. Others also, in various places where the need was great, proceeded to imitate the work begun in Gloucester.

Within four months the new society had founded five Sunday Schools and raised nearly a thousand pounds to pay their teachers and find the needed textbooks and supplies. In 1798 they began work in Wales and a few years later in Ireland; in each case first raising a large fund to meet the expenses. In spite of the constantly increasing number of voluntary schools, this society refused to modify its original plans; and its activity was later merged with that of the Sunday School Union. In Scotland, early in 1797, some pious folk of various denominations formed "The Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society," for promoting religious schools on Sunday evening; and in spite of opposition the lay-taught Sunday School became a widespread Scottish institution.²

¹ Vol. 54, pt. 1, p. 410. Raikes had already, Nov. 3, 1783, printed in his *Gloucester Journal* a brief account of his experiment and its good effects; his article, as he remarked to Col. Townley, was reprinted in the London papers. In its issue for May, 1784 (p. 377), the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported Sunday Schools in successful operation at Leeds, Yorkshire, with 1,800 children enrolled; the editor adding: "This institution wears a most promising appearance, and, were it to be adopted generally, would do more toward lessening the increase of felons than all the schemes that have been proposed."

² W. H. Watson, *The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, chs. 4, 7.

A year or more before the start of the Sunday School Society, an earnest evangelical preacher of South London, the Rev. Rowland Hill, opened what is said to have been the first Sunday School in London, near Surrey Chapel, his church. In 1791 Thomas Cranfield, a humble tradesman, converted to Christ, began to meet the needs of the London slums according to Raikes's methods, rallied helpers, succeeded in planting several Sunday Schools, and stirred others to do likewise. The ultimate outcome of this movement was the system of "ragged schools" which has ever since been a noteworthy feature of London philanthropy.

In 1796, two earnest young Christians of London, Joseph Fox and William Brodie Gurney, took hold of a Sunday School that under a mercenary, paid master had been languishing; and with new zeal and volunteer teachers they soon raised its membership from thirty pupils to four times that number. Other schools on the same plan soon followed. Mr. Gurney, who made this start as a youth of nineteen, began in 1803 to gather Sunday School teachers at his home for fellowship and mutual help; and on July 13 of that year they met in Surrey Chapel and organized "The Sunday School Union."

With meager resources the new agency began at once to prepare and sell materials for the use and guidance of voluntary Sunday Schools. The Sunday School Society's issues were available only as a free gift to schools run on their plan. In 1805 three of these young leaders began to issue the first Sunday School periodical, the *Youth's Magazine*. The Union met once a year as a society, promoted the forming of Sunday Schools, and in 1811, with the advent of William F. Lloyd as its secretary, began a more public service. Under the name of the National Sunday School Union it still continues to be the leading Sunday School agency of Great Britain.³

³ Watson, chs. 6, 9; W. H. Groser, *A Hundred Years' Work for the Children*.

In 1788 the Raikes movement came to Philadelphia, then the largest city of the new American republic. Rev. William White, the young and ardent rector of the united parishes of Christ Church, St. Peter's and St. James's, had gone to London the year before to receive episcopal consecration. On his return, he proposed to the vestry of Christ Church that they organize Sunday Schools on the Raikes plan. As they delayed action, he presented it to his congregation as a move greatly needed for moral and spiritual regeneration. Several influential citizens were interested, including the noted physician and publicist, Benjamin Rush, a Universalist, the Quakers Joseph Sharpless and Thomas P. Cope, and the liberal Roman Catholic Matthew Carey. On December 19, 1790, the friends of the cause met and decided to organize. A week later they formed "The First Day or Sunday School Society," and elected Bishop White as president, a place he held for forty-six years.

Rooms were promptly secured in various parts of the city, masters employed, and schools begun. Sessions were held on Sunday for about five hours, before worship in the morning and after worship in the afternoon, with frequent visits in a body to some near-by church service. Much of the instruction was moral and religious, with reading lessons from the Bible; and some of the teachers served without pay. Most of the studies however were of ordinary school type and the dominant motive seems to have been educational. A year after organization the society petitioned the State Legislature to establish a system of public schools, pointing to the good effect of Sunday Schools as proof of what state-supported schools might do. By 1814 it had raised over ten thousand dollars for the work; and five years later, recognizing that advance in general education and the rise of voluntary schools had met the needs it originally faced, it closed its schools. Its organization continued for the benefit of voluntary Sunday Schools in and near Philadelphia,

and it is now a subsidiary of the American Sunday School Union.⁴

Besides this well-known Philadelphia enterprise, there are indications that like movements were attempted in other cities. Trumbull lists a Sunday School started in 1791 in Boston; and Marianna C. Brown reports a school for secular instruction on Sunday organized in New York as early as 1791 and incorporated in 1796. Both these efforts were doubtless soon regarded as steps toward public education rather than the teaching of religion. To the latter class however clearly belongs the story that "in 1793 a poor African woman, Katy Ferguson, knowing nothing of Raikes or of the Sunday Schools elsewhere, established one . . . in New York City, for the benefit of the poor street children of the humble quarter in which she lived."⁵ Several other cases of sporadic Sunday instruction in religion have been mentioned as of these early days.

The earliest appearance of the Sunday School in Virginia was clearly due to the Wesleyan evangelical movement. In 1785 a Methodist, William Elliott, on his plantation in Accomac County on the Eastern Shore, started a Sunday School for the white boys and girls in his charge and for his own children, with like provision for his negro slaves. Neighboring children were soon added. "All were taught the rudiments of reading, in order that they might be able to read God's Word for themselves," and also the Methodist catechism. When a church was organized in the vicinity the school was continued under its care; and it survives to this day.⁶

⁴ O. C. Michael, *The Sunday School in the Development of the American Church*, ch. 2; E. W. Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union*, new edition, p. 44.

⁵ H. C. Trumbull, *Yale Lectures on the Sunday School*, p. 123; M. C. Brown, *Sunday School Movements in America*, p. 21; *American Cyclopaedia*, art. "Sunday Schools."

⁶ C. W. Baines, *First American Sunday School*, a pamphlet issued by the Virginia State Sunday School Association!

Francis Asbury, sent over by Wesley in 1771, was made bishop or superintendent of the Methodists in 1784. In 1786, in Hanover County, Virginia, he organized a Sunday School in the house of Thomas Crenshaw. The General Conference of 1790, no doubt at his instance, enjoined the establishing of Sunday Schools. Some schools were started, but the difficulties encountered caused these efforts to be short-lived. The school at Mr. Crenshaw's continued for at least a year; and the Methodists had other schools antedating the conference resolution.⁷

Besides the Accomac County Sunday School, two others, started before 1800, have a documented history to the present time. Both of these began as Raikes-type schools for factory children and were in fact part of that noteworthy and patriotic adventure, the establishment of the cotton industry on American soil. The first, at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, was begun in 1791 or 1792 by David Arnold, at the instance of Samuel Slater, builder of the first American cotton mill. That school lapsing, another start was made about 1797, with the help of students from Brown University at Providence. The school soon came under the care of the First Baptist Church of Pawtucket and so continues. The other Sunday School was started in April, 1794, by Peter Colt, manager of the new cotton mill established by the enterprise of Alexander Hamilton and his associates at Passaic Falls in New Jersey, now the city of Paterson. It was taught by his daughter Sarah, a girl of eleven, and in 1814 came under the care of the First Presbyterian Church, the first church of the village. In 1894 I attended its hundredth anniversary.⁸

⁷ W. P. Strickland, *The Pioneer Bishop*, p. 217; A. G. Wardle, *History of the Sunday School Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, p. 47.

⁸ L. G. Pray, *History of Sunday Schools*, p. 207; souvenir program of 1921, quoting records in St. Paul's Church, Pawtucket, as to Arnold's work; anniversary pamphlet, First Baptist Sunday

As early as 1788 at Halifax, Nova Scotia, a Raikes-type Sunday School with two lay teachers was in operation in St. Paul's church, following work begun by the rector five years before.⁹ In 1804 a Baptist Sunday School, later made part of the Second Baptist Church, was started in Baltimore.¹⁰ In 1810, at Littleton, a hamlet of Morris County, New Jersey, a union Sunday School was started which remains to this day a union school. In Bath, New Hampshire, a Sunday School was started in 1805 by a minister from Scotland, the Rev. David Sutherland. It was maintained until in 1817 "a new spirit was awakened and other schools were opened." The first indigenously New England Sunday School on the voluntary plan was started at Beverly, Massachusetts, by two young women, in 1810.

These early founders were heroes of the Sunday School cause, working without the support of a general movement. The years around 1800 were marked in America by radicalism in politics and outspoken infidelity in religion. All forms of religious zeal encountered opposition; and anything savoring of "enthusiasm" was feared and shunned by well-to-do congregations and old-school divines. Few had heard of the Sunday School, and those who had were likely to regard it as an English notion which patriots should reject, or as an unwarranted intrusion of schoolroom labor upon the holy hours of the Sabbath day. In Hudson, New York, evangelical Epis-

School, Pawtucket, October, 1897, extracts furnished by Miss Annie R. Gray. For the Paterson school, Hist. Collections of N. J. (1844), p. 409, quoting *Gordon's Gazetteer*; centennial program, with portrait of Miss Sarah Colt, "founder of the school." The pastor, at the anniversary, showed me an old banner inscribed for the school's fiftieth anniversary, and said that one of his members recalled marching behind it as a child, and that when the procession passed a certain house an old lady waved to them, and he was told that she was the lady who had started the school.

⁹ Rev. R. A. Hiltz, in *Nelson's Cyc. of Sunday Schools and Religious Educ.*, art. "Sunday School Work of the Church of England in Canada."

¹⁰ *Catheart's Baptist Cyclopaedia*, art. "Sunday Schools."

copalians in 1803 tried and failed to stem the local opposition. About the same time, in New York City, Mr. and Mrs. Divie Bethune, returning from an extended visit to Scotland and London, made earnest efforts to plant Sunday Schools in their city, after the new evangelical pattern which they had undoubtedly seen in operation abroad; but their work was short-lived; for Mrs. Bethune herself, in the memoir of her saintly mother, Mrs. Isabella Graham, noted that in February, 1804, there were "no public, free, or Sabbath schools in the city."¹¹

Reasons for the delay in starting an American Sunday School movement are clear. American industries were then "infant industries" indeed, with little call for the factory type of Sunday School service. Public education quickly took over the educational side of the work that appealed to the Philadelphia pioneers, and the inheritors of the Puritan and Scottish Sabbath tradition were set even more firmly against the dangerous Sunday School innovation. Political strife, privateering on the high seas, the embargo of 1807, and finally the War of 1812, checked free communication with Great Britain and limited the influence on America of its steadily advancing movement for both the philanthropic and the evangelical type of Sunday School.

But the forces of the cause were gathering; and even its conscientious opposers were preparing the way. With evident avoidance of the disapproved schools on Sunday, they sought in other ways to meet the irreligion of the time. In 1804 a number of women in Philadelphia formed a "union society" for the education of poor girls, as Mrs. Graham had done in New York for the children of her widows the year before. In 1808 some Presbyterians of Philadelphia, joining with others like-minded, formed at the home of the Rev. Archibald Alexander "The Evangelical Society," to provide chap-

¹¹ *Memoir*, p. 228.

els, school buildings, and schools, with mission services, and with religious instruction at other than Sunday hours. In 1809 a Moral Society was formed in Pittsburgh; and in the course of its work, for the better carrying out of its purposes, it opened a Sunday School.

In October, 1811, at what is now Brockville, Ontario, the Rev. William Smart, sent out by the London Missionary Society, organized what sixty years later he declared was the first Sunday School in Canada. It was organized in the court house and later placed under the care of the First Presbyterian Church of Brockville; and, like those already named, it continues to this day.¹²

In 1811, the Evangelical Society of Philadelphia, to aid in its then extensive work, employed a young English missionary on his way to India, the Rev. Robert May, a schoolmaster and a devoted friend of children. In addition to his work as children's evangelist and teacher, he conducted, from October, 1811, until late in January, 1812, a Sunday School of the voluntary evangelical type, which was new to the Philadelphians. Proceeding to New York early in 1812, Mr. May was a welcome visitor with Mrs. Graham and the Bethunes, stirring their desire to see evangelical Sunday Schools established also in that city. In May, 1814, this godly household received from Stephen Prust of Bristol, England, a book describing the work of the adult schools formed in that city under his patronage a year or two before. Mrs. Graham, deeply moved by the stories it told of good done to the society's pupils, entered at once upon a like work in her own home. She invited the young working people of Greenwich Village to her house at eight on Sunday mornings for Christian teaching. Two months later she died; but the work she thus began was continued by her son and daughter as a Sunday School.

¹² E. W. Halpenny, in *Nelson's Cyc.*, art. "Canada Sunday School Work"; *The Sunday School Times*, Dec. 9, 1871, p. 781.

The following January Mr. Bethune, on a visit to Philadelphia, took with him this Bristol report; and through the publication of its moving stories, several adult schools were started—one in the jail. By March, 1816, eight adult schools were in operation in Philadelphia; while a number of voluntary Sunday Schools had sprung from the example set by Mr. May. Another New Yorker, Eleazer Lord, after a visit of several months in Philadelphia, returned in the summer of 1815 filled with enthusiasm for the voluntary evangelical type of Sunday School, of which he had secured sample books and cards, with an account of how these schools had developed in England. To win the leading New York pastors and laymen to this novel plan, however, took much canvassing and explaining.

The close of the War of 1812 made transatlantic communication easier; and it also brought renewed attention to the interests of education and religion. The way was now open in the two largest cities for a formal organization of the American Sunday School movement, whose beginnings and casual connections I have sought to trace. The first steps of organization were taken in New York in 1816, and the following year it took form as a movement of national leadership in Philadelphia.

On January 24, 1816, Mrs. Bethune, encouraged by her husband and his friends, and by her pastor, the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, gathered several hundred interested women, read to them extracts from various letters and reports from overseas, and secured the organization of "The Female Union Society," which a week later completed its plans and within three months could show sixteen Sunday Schools for women and girls, from six denominations, with two hundred teachers and nearly 2,200 scholars. Opening a depository the following year, issuing books and papers, and vigorously pushing their

cause, they had by 1828 spent over nine thousand dollars in publishing alone.¹³

Not to be outdone by the women, the men of this fellowship, on February 26, 1816, organized "The New York Sunday School Union Society"; Richard Varick, mayor of the city, was made president and Mr. Lord, secretary. By the end of the year they had twenty-eight boys' Sunday Schools with three thousand scholars. The two unions for some years worked side by side, merging when the need for sex-separated Sunday Schools was no longer felt.

In Philadelphia the formal start, destined to be central for the nation, was made on May 13, 1817, when a number of local societies and Sunday Schools united to form what was later called "The Sunday and Adult School Union." The laymen who formed this organization were aided by the advice of Mr. Bethune, who attended one of their meetings and gave them the benefit of the New York experience. The first idea, to form an association for the city and state alone, was expanded to that of a work for the country as a whole. In December, 1817, a new constitution was adopted; and the managers, meeting in January following, chose as their first president Alexander Henry, who continued in that office for thirty years.¹⁴

In its first year the Philadelphia society faced the general need of religious books for children's reading. Its first issue was a brief Anglo-Indian story called *Little Henry and His Bearer*, by Mrs. Sherwood; it was doubtless the original foundation for that old tradition

¹³ Watson, p. 98, following contemporary accounts printed in the (London) *Sunday School Repository*; *Memoir of Mrs. Bethune*, p. 120. The *Repository* for April, 1816, ii, prints in full Mrs. Bethune's letter describing her meeting for organization, written that same day.

¹⁴ A list of the societies and schools attending the first meeting, taken by Alex. Kirkpatrick from the original minute book, is given in *The Sunday School Times* for July 8, 1871, p. 425.

that Sunday School library books are all about some "good little boy who died." Ten thousand each of hymn books, alphabet cards, and Ten Commandments cards, with nearly half a million reward tickets for verse memorizing, were issued in 1818. Much voluntary field labor by the Union's officers and managers was followed in 1821 by the sending out of the Rev. William C. Blair as its first paid missionary; his work proved so fruitful and so greatly needed that the service thus begun has never been discontinued.

In 1820 the New York Union magnanimously proposed a merger of all local unions with this leading body. The Sunday and Adult School Union accordingly took steps to change its charter and its name. It invited all unions not yet affiliated to join its ranks. On May 25, 1824, without change of officers or break in its continuity, it became The American Sunday School Union. Its own affiliated Sunday Schools at that time numbered 723, representing seventeen states and the District of Columbia, with about fifty thousand pupils. Its place as national leader of the Sunday School cause was thus already well established.¹⁵

From this point on, if my account of the rapidly expanding Sunday School movement in America is to have coherence and unity as the story of a cause, it will necessarily follow the successive phases of that central leadership established in 1817 and enlarged and renamed in 1824. Of those phases I have given you the formula: A plus B for C—the union; A plus B plus C—the association; D plus D₁ plus D₂—the denominations; and A plus B plus C=D plus D₁ plus D₂—the council. As the constituency of this leadership has throughout been composed of the Protestant denominations usually classed as evangelical, the story will fail adequately to recognize the work of the Unitarians and other bodies classed as

¹⁵ List in Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union*, p. 447.

non-evangelical; nor will it satisfactorily represent that of the Episcopal and Lutheran communions, whose coöperative relations have represented their constituencies and ideals only in part. Each of these fields has a noteworthy story to tell; and all have made valued contributions to the general cause. In Lewis G. Pray the Unitarians furnished the first and best American historian of the Sunday School; and in graded lesson method they were far in advance of that International progress which we are later to follow; while both the other communions named have developed curricula of original type and distinctive educational value.

In a broadening program and with unremitting service the Union continued to make its national leadership good. For more than forty years it remained the central agency of American Sunday School progress. For at least half this period its expansion was rapid, its labors were wise, enterprising, and heroic, and the loyalty of its constituent Sunday Schools was well maintained. The devoted laymen who formed its board of managers, with the officers they employed, in the face of detraction and resistance now hard to understand, conceived, undertook, and carried to success a series of enterprises that made the Sunday School an esteemed institution, accepted by the churches, equipped with an ample literature, established on the country's remotest frontiers, and acknowledged as a major interest of every denomination.

Opposition to the Sunday School took a long time to die. Not until 1814 did churches begin to take Sunday Schools officially under their care. Four years later, as Trumbull relates, a pastor in Norwich, Connecticut, vigorously opposed the Sunday School held by a devoted young girl of his congregation.¹⁶ The early reports of the Union are full of defenses of the Scriptural propriety and practical usefulness of Sunday Schools. In 1829

¹⁶ *Yale Lectures*, p. 128.

Dr. Archibald Alexander, a strong friend of the Union, published his able *Suggestions in Vindication of Sunday Schools*; but for years thereafter the issue he defended was widely and influentially opposed. Thirty years ago an elderly friend in Trenton, New Jersey, told me with solemn finality: "My old pastor in Scotland used to say that there was twa things that had na warrant in the Word o' God; one of them was the Sabbath-schule, and the other was Temperance!" Throughout these early decades the Union continued outspokenly to champion the Sunday School cause.

With like militancy it maintained the principle of united evangelical effort, both in its publication work and in its organization of the field. Without such united effort there was not then, and there never has been, the slightest hope of progress for the Sunday School cause. But this principle met bitter attacks from the citadels of denominationalism; and in the early Union publications one can see many signs that the managers had to build, like Nehemiah, with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

The Union rapidly spread through a network of county and state auxiliary unions. By the close of 1825 these numbered nearly four hundred, nine of which were state-wide. Though loosely organized, they did much to spread the Sunday School gospel, enlist and educate leaders, and bring conservative churches into line. All held annual conventions. Promoted as they were from the center and utilized as tributaries to the Union's work, they formed no proper part of that indigenous "convention movement" to be considered in Chapter III. In a few years they all lapsed, except the union of Brooklyn, whose picturesque annual parade has enabled it to survive amid later forms of organization.

In its successive issues of Scripture question books, from 1825 to the new lesson-help era of the sixties, with

the excellent Bible dictionaries and other helps that formed part of the system, the Union signally contributed to the development and supply of the Sunday School's curriculum.

Following a careful survey of needs and resources, the Union in 1830 launched the vast "Mississippi Valley Enterprise," to place within two years a Sunday School in every community beyond the Alleghenies where one was needed. Four years later a like enterprise was undertaken for the states of the South. Widespread enthusiasm was aroused; large sums were raised; and many missionaries, some of them distinguished divines, were sent forth into the rapidly filling states of the Mississippi Valley. The significance of this work for the rescue of American Christianity from the perils of a godless and unchurched frontier has never been sufficiently acknowledged.

The Union crowned its early labors by moving in the spring of 1832 for a general, nation-wide survey and study of Sunday School method and the means for improving it. Realizing that the rapid and unconsidered advances so far made required such a critical evaluation, and also that its own moves were jealously watched, it called a conference of all Sunday School superintendents, teachers, and other workers, at which plans were made for a national convention of the friends of the Sunday School. This convention met in New York, October 3, 1832; and a second was held in Philadelphia the following May, to complete the program of study. In these two conventions the American Sunday School movement found itself as a purposive enterprise in religious education. At New York the attendance was wonderful, the 220 delegates representing fourteen states and territories and the best Christian thought of the country. The proceedings were prepared for by extensive inquiries, covering all phases of Sunday School work. On the findings of this convention and its suc-

cessor the forces of the Sunday School worked, without observable improvement, for more than thirty years.¹⁷

Brilliant and beneficent as were these services of the Union, and needful as they then were to the cause, the agency that rendered them could not, in the nature of the case, permanently meet the fundamental needs of the American situation. In spite of its constant effort to forestall sectarian criticism, it did not unite but rather challenged the denominational forces. It carefully avoided any approach to control over its auxiliary unions and schools; but its centralized and non-representative plan of organization gave it the appearance of paternalism. By some of its enemies this was seized on as a basis for charges of danger to religious liberty from what was represented as the great Philadelphia monopoly. Despite able and vigorous defenses, the fight was stubbornly maintained. When after the reorganization of 1824 the Union repeatedly applied to the Pennsylvania legislature for a charter, its foes attacked it viciously; and it got no charter for more than twenty years.

The English notion that Sunday School teaching is for the lower but not for the upper classes was recognized and rebuked by the Union's managers in one of their early reports. How it was met and vanquished in aristocratic old New England is told by that noted Sunday School worker, Richard G. Pardee. Shortly before his death he wrote:

¹⁷ The minutes of these two conventions and of the conference that preceded them may be found in the files of the *Sunday School Journal* for 1832 and 1833, preserved in the library of the American Sunday School Union. Dr. Trumbull, in his historical introduction to the report of the Fifth National Convention of 1872, notes the small mileage (229, to be exact) of railroads then in operation in the United States, the prevalence of cholera in New York that summer, and the high and representative character of the delegates. Rice gives a full account, with a transcript of the 78 preliminary interrogatories, p. 452.

Several years ago, while in attendance upon a Sunday School meeting, the writer of this enjoyed a lengthened interview with the late Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, then in his prime. Our conversation turned upon that unfortunate feature of the cause in England which virtually excluded all the better-to-do children of that country.

Dr. Beecher's eye lit up at once, and with great animation he said to me, "It was the same here at first; and I do not know but I had an important hand in producing the change. I saw the tendency of things, and feared that our Sunday Schools would result in a failure if only the poor children gained the benefit of them in this land, and it troubled me for a year or two. At last," said he, energetically, "I resolved to overthrow that system, and went and called upon Judge W., one of my most influential families, and said, 'Judge W., I want you to bring your children to Sunday School next Sabbath.' 'Me!' exclaimed the Judge in amazement." "Yes, you," calmly responded Dr. Beecher. "I have made up my mind to take my children, and I want you and a few others of the best families to popularize the thing." A little explanation secured the object.

He then called upon Mrs. S., the most aristocratic lady in the community, and said, "Mrs. S., I want you to lead your two daughters into our Sunday School next Sabbath;" and, said the Doctor, "Mrs. S. almost shouted in astonishment." But a more particular and careful explanation than sufficed with Judge W. succeeded here; and then the family of the first physician was in like manner secured, "and we all turned our labor and influence on the Sunday School movement, and it gave an unheard-of impetus to our Sunday School, and by means of the press and by letters and personal conversation the facts became known and met with almost universal approval and adoption in our country, and the reform soon became complete."¹⁸

¹⁸ *The Sabbath School Index* (1868), p. 18. Dr. Beecher must have made this move some years before he left Boston for Cincinnati in 1832. In Philadelphia, following the formation in 1826 of the General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union, its secretary, later bishop, W. R. Whittingham, "openly urged

How vast and momentous was this far-seeing and courageous move of Dr. Beecher it is hard for us to realize. Where would now be the open door for church-school progress if the taint of class distinction had been suffered to persist in the traditions and associations of the Sunday School? That it took the old notion a long time to disappear I can myself testify. Only forty years ago I was impressively told, in the old First Church of a certain Eastern city, that it was not the custom in that church for the prominent families to send their children to Sunday School: they were taught at home!

The vigorous enterprises of the Union, with its outspoken advocacy of the union principle, gave it a part, along with other great union agencies, in arousing the strong denominational reaction that marked the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In the field of literature and lesson supply its place and prestige were successfully challenged. Rival issues of question books, library books, and teachers' supplies increased in variety and volume. No pains were spared by zealous churchmen to attach every possible Sunday School firmly to the headquarters of its denomination. In 1826 the Episcopalians, in 1827 the Methodists, set up their own so-called "Sunday School Union." The early county and state unions faded away. The universality of the "Union Scripture Question Books" gave place to that diversity of lesson supply which the later advocates of uniformity

that the children of the rich needed it [the Sunday School] as much as those of the poor." (*Nelson's Cyc.*, art. on "Sunday School Work of the Protestant Episcopal Church.") In 1831, at the Raikes Jubilee in London, the Rev. J. C. Brigham, for the United States, testified, "It is now a general practice to introduce into these [American] schools children belonging to all classes of the community." *American Sunday School Magazine*, Jan., 1832, p. 360. The First National Sunday School Convention, New York, after hearing reports and discussion, resolved, "in the opinion of this Convention, that the Sunday School should embrace all classes in the community." *Sunday School Journal*, Oct. 10, 1832, p. 163.

contemptuously referred to as "the Babel series." The Union, with a treasury drained and debt-burdened with its missionary load, was in no position to defend its holdings; and the provinces of its once imperial leadership one by one slipped away.

Notwithstanding these setbacks, the missionary activities of the Union went on strenuously. In the wilder regions of the Atlantic states, throughout the settlements of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, up into the far northwest of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and over the great Southland, Union missionaries were planting and replanting Sunday Schools, placing Sunday School libraries, revisiting, supervising, training the crude material of the teaching force, and wherever the way opened holding evangelistic meetings and encouraging the people in forming churches of the denomination locally agreed on. No historian, so far as I know, has yet done justice to the part thus played by the Sunday School as tool and the Union as force in the shaping and maintaining of the fundamental Christianity of this nation's spirit and the strength of its churches as a factor in the national life. And out of this far-flung and devoted service, as we shall see in the next chapter, came the new force that was to lift from the Union's hand the banner of the cause and carry it forward through another great forty years of Sunday School history.

II

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION MOVEMENT

FROM the sixties to the nineties of the last century "the convention movement," as it was called, stood for all that was progressive, evangelical, and idealistic in Sunday School service. To attend a convention revealed to the local worker his chosen cause operating on a wider field, broadened his fellowship, inspired him to new effort, and returned him with loyalty to church and denomination intelligently reinforced. Despite its weaknesses, the convention movement formed a mighty factor, not only in Sunday School advancement, but in the reshaping of the life and ideals of North American Protestant Christianity. Three main sources contributed to this movement's origin and growth; and for the earliest of these we must go back to the American Sunday School Union's great missionary enterprise in the Middle West.

One of the fruits of that enterprise was a little Sunday School organized and reorganized by Union missionaries at Winchester, in mid-western Illinois. Into that Sunday School was recruited Stephen Paxson, the unconverted father of one of the pupils. Deeply interested, converted, and anxious to spread the blessing that had meant so much to him, Paxson toured the surrounding region, planted many Sunday Schools, and started them in self-active service. Finding among his constituents some of education and capacity, while others were backward, he conceived the idea of bringing them all together for mutual conference in a county Sunday School convention. On April 20, 1846, accordingly, in the Presby-

terian church of Winchester, Scott County, Illinois, the first convention of the movement was held; with another the following fall in the larger county of Pike, over the Illinois River.¹

Paxson's move was an adventure. With frontier denominational feelings what they then were, the idea of bringing "all those folks" together into one church seemed to his neighbors a desperate scheme. His son later intimated that at that first meeting they did have a few uncomfortable times. But Christian comity was soon learned; the gains motivated repetition; and the practice spread from county to county. It was largely due to this school of Christian manners that we now smile at the question said to have been put by the Turkish governor of Jerusalem to the committee who asked him for permission to hold, near the site of Calvary, the World's Sunday School Convention of 1904. Mindful of his trials at Easter at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and informed that fifty-four Christian sects would be represented, he inquired through his interpreter whether the committee thought that as many as one policeman to each delegate would be sufficient to keep the peace!

The Union made Paxson one of its missionaries, thus enlarging his freedom to promote convention work. His later career as a missionary was outstanding. By 1856 the county workers also began to organize townships. In the spring of 1859 they met at Dixon in their first state Sunday School convention.

Another start of the convention movement came four years earlier, in the form of a unique expedition. In September, 1855, nearly a thousand Massachusetts

¹ B. P. Drury, *A Fruitful Life*, p. 40. Besides this brief biography by Paxson's daughter, see his spirited report of that first convention, and his son's further report of his father's experiences. *International Convention Reports*: Atlanta 1878, p. 103; Toronto 1881, p. 75.

"Sabbath School teachers," including many pastors, started from Boston on a visit to the famous Crystal Palace and other sights of New York, and to their fellow-workers of the metropolis. "They were received," wrote Pardee, "with great cordiality and mingled delightfully . . . for two or three days, closing with a grand farewell meeting in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn." The sessions proved to be so profitable that "Massachusetts called a three-days' state Sabbath School convention in the city of Boston later in the fall of the same year, November 13, 14, 1855, with another a year later; and New York held its first state Sabbath School convention, of three days, in the city of Albany, in the month of January, 1857."²

That enterprising New York visit clearly marked the start of the specific movement for state and provincial Sunday School associations, out of which the present councils of religious education have grown. Unrelated either to Paxson's far Western movement or to the Union, these early state bodies were essentially democratic, territorial, and coöperative. The Massachusetts work, after some years of struggle, passed away: the New York work has been continuous to the present time.

Connecticut was the third state to organize, with a state convention at Hartford in April, 1857. Here was added to the movement the function of the annual statistical canvass. An ardent young Christian, Henry Clay Trumbull, undertook, as convention secretary, to gather for his own county and, through county secretaries for the other seven counties, the facts as to Sunday School membership, work, and needs. The results produced a sensation, showing as they did that in that favored old Puritan state more children were outside the Sunday School than within. Continuing and perfecting his work,

² *The Sabbath School Index*, p. 24; joint report of the two Mass. conventions, 1855 and 1856, with story of the preliminary visit.

Dr. Trumbull rapidly established and standardized the office of county secretary, as Mr. Paxson had that of county organizer and president; and these have ever since continued the basic offices in the county organization structure of state and provincial associations and councils.³

Profiting by these efforts, the leaders in New Jersey, in 1858, called their state convention for November 3 and 4 at New Brunswick, held a businesslike set of sessions, and organized the state Sunday School Association on plans of county and township organization, which assured the strength and continuity of the work which in substance persists to this day.⁴

In the work and lives of a group whom we may call the Chicago evangelicals can be discerned the third and most definite of this movement's human sources of power. To Chicago came in 1854 a zealous young Christian from New Jersey, Benjamin Franklin Jacobs; and two years later from Boston another, Dwight Lyman Moody. Into the Sunday School work of the city, already well advanced, these men threw themselves with a new earnestness; in Mr. Moody's case with original and effective methods of recruiting and evangelizing. Great mission schools, ministering to many sides of social need, were multiplied and took on a deep evangelistic fervor. In the revival days of 1857 and 1858 these and other leaders found each other. William Reynolds, a prosperous and devout meat-packer of Peoria, joined the band in 1861. They went into the moving experiences of war work for the Union soldiers. As peace drew nigh they returned, and Mr. Moody, especially, was determined to make Sunday School work more than ever a power for God and salvation.

³ Reports, Conn. state conventions, 1857 and 1872; P. E. Howard, *The Life Story of Henry Clay Trumbull*, p. 151.

⁴ First (N. J.) convention report; pamphlet by the author, *Fifty Years of Progress* (1908), with a reprint of the first report.

The Illinois state convention had never shown much life. In advance of the sixth annual session at Springfield, May, 1864, Moody, his pastor, and his friend Jacobs arrived, to start a revival that should waken the convention and the state. Their plan succeeded. Hundreds were converted at that convention and soon after, and were started in lines of class, school, church, and community evangelistic effort. Convention attendance greatly increased. Dividing the state, the leaders proceeded to revive Paxson's earlier county organizations. The influence of John H. Vincent's movement for Sunday School institutes, without checking the evangelism of the county and state conventions, added to them a much needed educational quality. In Chicago, already supplied with a city Sunday School union and a county teachers' association, Vincent in 1865 added an institute—what we would now call a training school—meeting weekly; and in November of that year these three were combined in the "Cook County Sunday School Union." To Moody, Jacobs, A. G. Tyng, and the other crusaders was thus added a group including Vincent, Edward Eggleston, C. R. Blackall, and a little later M. C. Hazard; with E. Payson Porter as county and state leader in the statistical field. This vigorous state convention movement in Illinois forms a background for that rapid advance at Chicago in Sunday School lesson method to be discussed in Chapter VI.

Returning now to that significant starting-point, the great revival of 1857, it seemed to the leaders at the New York state convention of 1858 an auspicious time to call a national convention of Sunday School teachers and workers, to meet at Philadelphia, February 22 to 24, 1859. In those sessions, glowing with the still stirring revival spirit of the time, the American Sunday School convention movement first took on a national form. It was essentially a mass gathering of local workers, with B. W. Chidlaw and other Union missionaries, and officers

from the new state associations. But, unlike the convention of 1833, it took thought for its own succession, by appointing a committee, headed by the Philadelphia merchant and philanthropist George H. Stuart, to call another national convention in 1861. This act marks the beginning of a central leadership for the American Sunday School cause other than that of the American Sunday School Union. The Union cordially endorsed this convention enterprise; and in its new weekly, *The Sunday School Times*, March 5, 1859, it printed a verbatim report of the entire proceedings.

The close of the two-year interval, for which this convention had planned, found the states of the nation at war. Its committee's now impossible task was forgotten. The chairman joined hundreds of others, including the Illinois group, in the work of the United States Christian Commission. Not until the Illinois state convention of May, 1868, did the national convention movement again take form. Jacobs, Eggleston, and E. C. Wilder, the state president, there moved for a renewal of the Philadelphia convention. A group of Sunday School leaders, thus called, met at Detroit, during the International Young Men's Christian Association convention a month later, and called a convention for the continent, with representation from foreign lands. Mr. Stuart's committee awakened at this call and joined the other group. International features were dropped; New Jersey extended its invitation; and, with the great, warm-hearted Fourth National Convention at Newark, April 28 to 30, 1869, began that series of triennial National and International conventions, from 1914 quadrennial, which are still going on.⁵

⁵ In the printed report this is mistakenly called the Third convention, from an idea that the Philadelphia convention of 1833 was merely an adjournment of the first at New York seven months before. This is disproved by Trumbull in his historical introduction to the 1872 convention report.

Realizing the opposition that the Union had already experienced, and that any successor to its centralized leadership must experience, from a denominationally organized Protestantism, those early leaders of the national convention movement consciously forestalled it by their policy, which ere long became established, that each successive convention should be dealt with as a separate enterprise, to be promoted during the triennium or other interval by an executive committee whose life automatically expired with adjournment of the convention it had called. Mr. Jacobs enforced this policy in Illinois, carried it with him into the International field, and stood by it after his earlier colleagues had passed away. The succession of National and International conventions did form a new and growing central leadership for the Sunday School; but so long as this policy of official non-continuity could be maintained, that leadership in no way rivaled either the Union or the denominations, and these national agencies aided and encouraged it in many ways.

The Newark convention named a business committee, with Eggleston as chairman, to prepare for, plan, call, and hold a like convention three years later; deciding upon Indianapolis as the place and April, 1872, as the time. Trumbull, one of the secretaries of the Third convention, was with Vincent and Jacobs also a secretary at Newark; and on Eggleston's resignation he took his place as head of the business committee. With other leaders also holding through, virtual continuity for the movement was assured.

The Fifth National Convention of Indianapolis, 1872, took three forward steps on the movement's inevitable pathway toward that centralization and continuous headquarters life that was to produce, thirty years later, the International Sunday School Association. Recognizing the closeness of American and Canadian Sunday School interests, it resolved that the next convention should be

international, the Canadians being not merely visitors, as at Newark and Indianapolis, but constituents with the state delegations. The convention of Baltimore, 1875, therefore, became the First International Sunday School Convention. At the instance of the Illinois delegates their statistician, E. Payson Porter, was made statistical secretary for the coming Baltimore convention, without salary; he thus became in effect the first staff worker of the International service. His statistics, when presented, showed a total Sunday School membership for the United States and Canada of 6,850,834, in 74,-272 schools.⁶

These two acts were of deep significance for the future of North American Sunday School field leadership; but they have been almost forgotten in the attention paid to the third noteworthy act of this convention of 1872, the resolution to appoint an International Lesson Committee.

The story of how this mighty step was prepared for and taken has often been told.⁷ We shall see in Chapter VI how many steps in lesson making had preceded this action: the limited Bible lesson, the list of selected lessons, the sharing of one list by several Sunday Schools, the publishing of an annual question book on a selected list of Bible lessons, the practical uniformity of that list for a few years, division among the Sunday Schools through rival question-book issues, rapid popularization in the late sixties of improved lesson helps, the rise of large constituencies of Sunday Schools, each following an independent lesson course, wide platform insistence that infant and Bible classes should conform to the lesson already uniform for all classes of the main school, and architecture to make this full inter-class uniformity

⁶ Report, Baltimore 1875, appendix.

⁷ Convention report, 1872; Simeon Gilbert, *The Lesson System*; H. M. Hamill, *The International Sunday School Lessons* (pamphlet, 1901); J. R. Sampey, *The International Lesson System*, ch. 2.

physically possible. All that 1872 added in lesson making was to furnish, through an American-Canadian lesson committee, a substitute for the independence of Eggleston, Vincent, McCook, Newton, and several other editors, who had heretofore chosen lesson lists of their own.

Why, then, to attain so slight an advance, did B. F. Jacobs, the untiring champion of this move, work for it so desperately? Why did he win declarations in favor of one uniform lesson for all the country's Sunday Schools, first from his state convention in 1868, and again from his superintendents' conference at the National convention of 1869? Why, as a step toward his goal, did he, a Baptist, fall in behind the Methodist Eggleston's so-called National lessons published in Chicago in the monthly which Vincent had started, vigorously promote their already large popularity, write weekly comments on those selections for his denominational paper, and even induce his own denominational publishing house to follow the National selections rather than any of their own? When the business committee for the coming Indianapolis convention met in July, 1871, to perform its task and adjourn, why did he, in defiance of his principle as to the strict limitation of national convention functions, ask that committee to enter the arena of lesson making by calling a conference of lesson publishers a month later to consider the uniform lesson issue? Why did he, at that conference, overcome opposition and secure the appointment of Eggleston, Vincent, McCook, and Newton, four prominent lesson makers, with himself, as a committee instructed to produce a uniform course for the year 1872? Why did he wring his will out of that squirmingly reluctant committee by steps as indomitable as Napoleon's, which he once vividly described to me? The preliminary "publishers' course" for 1872 once provided for, why did he labor to complete Vincent's conversion to uniformity till

the strong pull of Methodist business interest combined with pride in the Berean lesson selections was fully overcome? Why, finally, did he lead the pre-convention campaign with such vigor and on the convention floor rise to such heights of eloquence as to carry the vote over Eggleston, McKee of Kentucky, and other stout opponents and win him his First International Lesson Committee at last?

The leader of this fight was following a gleam. On the Illinois field he, Moody, Tyng, Reynolds, Chaplain McCabe and others of like burning zeal were working in mission schools, in the Young Men's Christian Association, and in county and state Sunday School conventions, to save souls, to waken cold pastors and churches, to bind Christians together around the Sunday School task, and to set them to teaching the Bible in more effective ways. Already many rivalries and maladjustments had been overcome. In the great city, and still more in the counties and townships, outspoken religion was entering the social life of the community, sweetening civic relations, revitalizing churches, schools, and neighborhoods. Christ, salvation, the Bible, human need, the claims of childhood, the Sunday School—all these terms were common. But when these people met in convention, they could not carry back to their classes any one message, simply because the lessons studied from the common textbook were diversely chosen. Bring these choices together, urged Jacobs, and to these terms of a common Christianity will be added the further bond of next Sunday's lesson. What might not that do for the Christian spirit in the community? But inasmuch as the Sunday Schools of each community received their lesson materials from various national headquarters, only a national unity could bring these local Sunday Schools together.

The gleam, then, that led Jacobs was that of a functioning, Bible-centered Protestant community religion,

exercised in the field of Sunday School instruction without violence to any denominational ties. It was not the hope of better teaching that called to him and his fellow campaigners, still less any fancy for uniformity or regimentation as an end in itself. These were but means. Those men were on a mountaintop. Over the walls of class and denominational separation they could see the rising power of a vital, functioning community religion, fed by a common Bible study, disseminated through Sunday School classes, and organized under a democratic township, county, and state-wide convention system. A saved and united community was their Holy Grail.

The twelve members of the new Lesson Committee proceeded at once to their task. Appointed in April, they had held three meetings in June, issued a revised list of lessons for 1873, and announced their plan for the six years to follow. A visit that summer to England by the chairman, Dr. Vincent, resulted in the adoption of the lessons by the London Sunday School Union, whose selection of golden texts for 1874 was incorporated in that year's series, and in a wide use of the lessons on the Continent and in the principal mission fields. As to their adoption in the United States and the realization of Jacobs's hopes for a community experience in the studying together by all Christians of one lesson each week, the report made three years later at Baltimore by the committee's secretary, Dr. Warren Randolph, tells the story:

The extent to which our work is already carried far surpasses the most sanguine expectations. These lessons are largely in use throughout our own land by Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, friendly members of the Reformed Churches, Adventists, and many others,—a mighty host, to be enumerated only by millions. Each of these denominations has established Sunday School periodicals, large parts of which are devoted to the exposition of the

lessons. In addition to these, private enterprise has established many more. The weekly religious press, of almost all denominations, in every issue expounds the same, and in some instances secular papers are doing it, while the teaching of the lesson for the following day has become the Saturday feature of the noonday prayer meetings all over the land. . . . East and West and North and South have come to love and use them.

To this testimony Mr. Jacobs, later in the same session, after showing various papers on the uniform lessons printed in Chinese and other foreign tongues, added a word as to the great union teachers' meetings in Boston, New York, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago, "where from eight to twelve hundred Sunday School teachers gather every Saturday afternoon . . . to study the uniform lesson." Several of those who reported the work of their respective states and provinces, referred to the value of the new bond of union in city and county convention work, which the common Bible lesson now furnished.

It was natural that the three main spokesmen for the lessons at Baltimore—Dr. Randolph the secretary, Dr. John Hall the New York preacher, and Mr. Jacobs the campaigner and popular Bible expositor—should view with exultation what God had wrought in three years and how abundantly the claims and predictions as to the lessons had been fulfilled. Educational critics, misled by these tones of pardonable gratulation and their echoes on the platforms and in the columns of a later day, have patronizingly treated the "sentiment" about all the Sunday Schools of the country and many in foreign lands studying the same Bible lesson each Sunday, and have offset against this the "real" values of gradation in lesson material. Sentimentalism has indeed played its part in uniform lesson maintenance and promotion; nor is there need that for such sentiment there be offered any apology. But the values in uniformity which even by

1875 had been realized and appropriated by the Sunday School world were numerous, and quite as real as any they dispossessed.

The most surprising and significant element in the lesson triumph was the stand taken by the denominations. As we have seen, the campaign before 1872 met natural opposition from Vincent, McCook of the Presbyterians, and other holders of plans and copyrights with which a change to uniformity would interfere. Denominations have always preferred to work independently, even when the gains of coöperation are clear; and when they reprint coöperative material they habitually give it a denominational front. The proposal for uniformity ran squarely athwart this deep-seated tendency. To inject into the national convention movement, scrupulous as it was to maintain inviolate the leadership prerogatives of the Union and the denominations, this monumental enterprise in local leadership was audacious, and for the strict constructionist, Jacobs, amazing. No explanation of his conduct is possible except a statesman-like foreseeing of what the result would be. Much less provocation by his successors brought the militant denominations vigorously into the field.

The explanation however is simple. As soon as Sunday School lessons became common to the Christians of the community, interest in them rose; and with the interest rose also the circulations and the publication profits. "Next Sunday's Bible lesson" entered the consciousness not merely of the faithful Sunday School teacher and the studious pupil, but of the man in the street. No amount of duplication of lesson treatments by family religious weeklies and Saturday's daily paper checked the rapid growth of the lesson-publishing interest; on the contrary it helped it along. Before theoretic champions of denominational prerogative, and individualistic objectors to limitations on lesson-making freedom, and prophets of a child-study that was not yet

born, could get together in opposition, the issue was settled, never to this day to be successfully upset. In 1893 the Baptists, and at various times other denominational houses, have tried to exercise their unquestioned prerogative to make the curriculum for their own Sunday Schools; and as to graded lessons this has, with International coöperation, proved increasingly possible. But every effort to retire the uniform series of lesson papers has so far proved an expensive failure. As to the lesson-making function of the International conventions and their successors, therefore, denominations for the most part have maintained an enthusiastic accord. Their conduct is an interesting illustration of economic determinism.

Both at Baltimore and at the Second International Convention at Atlanta, 1878, there was much oratory, the sentimental kind, such as had overflowed at the conventions of 1859 and 1869. For this there was now a deep and tragic reason. Both conventions met below Mason and Dixon's line; and at Baltimore the surrender at Appomattox was but ten years away. The amenities in which many of the speakers indulged, and such acts as the social conference requested by the Massachusetts delegation with the delegates from South Carolina and Georgia, formed needed approaches of Christians over a war-made gulf that utmost charity could not yet ignore. On both programs the educational element was chiefly supplied by Dr. Vincent; at Baltimore by a plea for systematic normal teaching, and at Atlanta by a detailed proposal of supplemental lessons to aid in effecting graduation. At Baltimore, as at Newark and Indianapolis, the "infant class teachers" held a separate conference. At Atlanta the First Lesson Committee reported further progress, two more denominations having adopted the uniform selections; and, their seven-years' course being complete, they were profusely thanked and a new committee of fourteen was chosen.

In state and provincial conventions the American Sunday School convention movement was also finding expression. At Newark sixteen states claimed for their fields a working organization holding annual conventions, and seeking to cover its counties with visitation and convention work; while from Canada the visiting delegates reported the organization, at Hamilton, Ontario, in 1865, of the "Sunday School Association of Canada," covering substantially the province of Ontario, and distinct from the "Canada Sunday School Union," a missionary body formed in 1836 and operating from Montreal. In 1872 the reports claimed nineteen states organized, including several where little was evidently done beyond missionary work under the Union; but at Baltimore only twelve fields were able to furnish to Mr. Porter statistical returns gathered by their county associations. No state before 1882 had a permanent secretary or field agent who was not, as in New Jersey, a volunteer, or, as in Kentucky, on part time, or, as in Connecticut and Pennsylvania, commissioned and paid by the Union. Nevertheless, when the Third International Convention met at Toronto, June 22 to 24, 1881, Mr. Porter could report more than two-fifths of the American and Canadian counties organized; and the statistics were in much better form.

To this convention came the Illinois delegates, convinced that the time had come for a forward move. The Sunday School cause needed a firmer leadership and a more aggressive policy. A small executive committee, changing its chairman with each triennium, could call and hold an International convention; but it could not properly lead, supervise, and extend the now large and active family of state, territorial, and provincial associations. To push this work did no violence to the separate convention theory. Only through strong auxiliaries could full state and provincial delegations be secured, and the fostering both of state and of county organiza-

tion was part of the work of holding the next International convention. Against the general policy of expansion stood a small group of conservatives, whose ideal for the International work was a triennial inspirational convention and nothing more.⁸

The issue arose over the support of the statistical secretary, Mr. Porter. His International work had so grown as to call for his full time. The convention found itself forced to increase its modest budget by fifteen hundred dollars a year or dispense with the statistical service. The treasurer, fortunately, was able to report current accounts balanced and the Lesson Committee's expenses fully assumed by the lesson publishers.

To Illinois, however, represented by M. C. Hazard, mover of the resolutions, William Reynolds, chairman of the convention's nominating committee, and Mr. Jacobs, speaker to the motion, this all but compulsory advance was only a part of what should now be provided for. Great progress had been made in field organization, which now covered all of the United States and British possessions except Delaware, British Columbia, Alaska, and four other territories. To bring to the Sunday Schools the benefits of the convention movement, with its fellowship and its stimulus to better teaching, active promotion was however needed, especially in the less advanced and more sparsely settled fields, so as to secure county as well as state and provincial organization. Mr. Jacobs startled the conservatives with a call for five thousand dollars a year for three years, pledged by the delegations, to cover usual expense, the statistical salary, and an expanded program. The resolutions prevailed; a little more than half of the income called for was pledged; the executive committee was reconstituted to represent each state and province; and this new committee chose Mr. Jacobs as its chairman and proceeded under its new policy as far as its limited funds would allow.

⁸ This viewpoint is well expressed in Rice, p. 369.

By this unexpected overturn of the former International policy, the convention movement made provision within itself for a positive leadership of the North American Sunday School cause. The new policy included careful separation, in form and nomenclature, of the successive conventions; continuity through a chairmanship too effective to be displaced; representation of each state and province on the convention's executive committee; salaried maintenance of statistical pressure on the auxiliaries, with resultant progress in organization; and development of this organization wherever needful by direct International service voluntarily rendered.

The private office of B. F. Jacobs in Chicago now became to all intents the headquarters of the cause. He was a real estate operator, able and ready to give freely both time and money to the work. To his superintendency of Immanuel Baptist Sunday School and his heavy labors on the International Lesson Committee, he now added the executive headship of what was then generally called "The International Sunday School Convention." The American Sunday School Union, in some states, still financed the state secretaryship, largely from collections made on the field served; but in 1882 that vestige of its old leadership also began to disappear, as Illinois and New Jersey, raising new funds from their county auxiliaries, found and employed secretaries of their own.⁹

Six years of effort were required to make the new International policy permanent and bring it to approxi-

⁹ For Illinois, W. B. Jacobs, younger brother of B. F. Jacobs, who began on faith, as he told me, without a stipulated salary, gave his summers to the state and continued his city work in the winter; for New Jersey, Samuel W. Clark, as a school principal, had from 1862 to 1880 served voluntarily, but in April, 1822, he was provisionally engaged by the state executive committee, his support being assumed by the counties in the state convention the following November.

mate fruition. At Louisville, June, 1884, Chairman Jacobs told the Fourth International Convention that by various expedients an income averaging \$2,900 a year had been secured, continuing Mr. Porter's work and permitting, mostly by voluntary service, field visitation of twenty-five states, territories, and provinces, with some progress in organization. To his recommendations of advance, however, a conservative majority on the executive committee added a supplement disapproving further expenditure for statistics or any but routine service to the field; and this the delegates approved. Under the spell of convention eloquence and Mr. Jacobs's earnest plea, this action was later reversed, and \$4,000 a year was raised for the next triennium. Thus given a new start, though the pledges shrank considerably in collection, the indefatigable chairman reported at Chicago, June, 1887, that the statistical work had been continued on a fractional salary, and that again, by volunteer field tours, twenty-five fields had been visited and encouraged and progress made in organization. This time the chairman's ringing report was unanimously approved.

One of its recommendations was for a Sunday School convention for all lands, to be held in Europe by the incoming executive committee in conjunction with workers abroad. Another was for at least one able speaker employed on full time. Before the Sixth International Convention met at Pittsburgh, 1890, both of these anticipations were realized. The World's First Sunday School Convention met at London, July 1 to 6, 1889, with a ten-day voyage together, on the *Bothnia*, of the American delegates, that proved hardly less influential. In October, 1887, William Reynolds began work as International Field Superintendent and for ten busy years, till he fell in the harness, carried the spirit and method of the Illinois workers over the field. During the triennium reported at Pittsburgh he, with Mr. Jacobs and six others, besides attending many state conventions,

aided in numerous city and county meetings, visiting every state and province but seven. The goal set by the progressive insurgents at Toronto had been attained.

By this very advance the non-competitive central leadership of the Sunday Schools, by which the convention movement had superseded the Union, was itself in process of passing away. The International conventions were as great and successful as their predecessors had been. But at least half the field local workers now received their common leadership from the conventions and institutes of the state and provincial and the county Sunday School associations. As with the old Union, the mother was being outgrown by the children of her bosom. Wherever Reynolds, Jacobs, his brother W. B., Dr. H. M. Hamill of Illinois, or Marion Lawrance of Ohio, with their fellow visitors, attended a state convention and its related committee meetings and rallies, seeds were planted of careful leadership in future county, township, and city work, as well as in the maintenance of strong state organization. The policy was indeed developing better International convention delegations and fuller statistics; but it was also decentralizing the leadership of the cause. In the growing demand of the state and provincial officers and their association for strengthening and stabilizing the International leadership may be seen the force which was soon to create and then to name and incorporate the International Sunday School Association.

III

THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

THE account of the North American Sunday School movement, as centrally organized, brings us up to the Sixth International Sunday School convention, held at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 24 to 27, 1890. The twenty years that followed were full of rapid changes, out of which grew two headships; first, the International Sunday School Association, and later, its determined rival, the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations. As a young recruit in the cause I sailed on the *Bothnia* with the American workers to the World's Sunday School Convention in London in 1889; I reported the Pittsburgh convention for *The Sunday School Times*; and two years later I became general secretary of the State Sunday School Association in New Jersey.

At Pittsburgh the dominance of B. F. Jacobs as International leader was as usual conspicuous; though several of his executive recommendations were reversed by convention action, and others, for lack of funds, could not then be carried out. His personality was always commanding. In 1892 as proxy for Dr. George W. Bailey, I attended the International executive committee meeting at Chautauqua under his chairmanship. Tall, well groomed, with iron-gray beard close-clipped over a firm chin, penetrating eyes and a deep, throaty voice, intensity in every word and movement, and withal an Irish readiness for joke, repartee, or allusion, his energy and fixity of purpose well merited Eggleston's caustic characterization at Indianapolis, "that incarnated steam-engine of a man, Jacobs!"

Mr. Jacobs's ambition for the expansion of every allowable form of International activity was truly imperial. Until the events of 1893 turned the tide, he was constantly busy with uniform lesson progress, with organizing distant state or provincial fields, tours to Mexico or the West Indies, and in conventions and promotional activities in Europe and the mission fields; always for salvation and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He took a deep interest in the Foreign Sunday School Association, that remarkable enterprise of the Brooklyn leader, Albert Woodruff and his son Henry C. Woodruff. I heard him tell of a meeting with Jewish leaders to canvass the possibility of union in Bible study for at least part of the seven-years' course. When plans were maturing for the great exposition held in his own city in 1893, he led in consideration of the ill-fated project of a "World's Columbian Exposition Model Sunday School Building," to be at once an object-lesson in architecture and a headquarters for exposition evangelism. The funds for this project from the too enthusiastic endorsers of the plan failed, and he assumed the responsibility for the large balance due the contractor. About this time he also undertook a heavy speculation in suburban Chicago land which shared in the utter collapse of city real-estate values and the general depression at the exposition's close. This made him virtually insolvent, and he tried hard to stave off a foreclosure that would have wiped out the savings of thousands with his own, and to repay unfulfilled promises. Many of his former friends were thus alienated and the last nine years of his life were darkened, but this misfortune should not be allowed to dim the glory of his earlier labors and triumphs.

Twenty years of easy success for the uniform lesson venture of 1872 had ill prepared the hosts of loyal Internationalists to meet the old challenge of the rival Blakeslee lessons, that appeared in 1892, even though the

quarterly portions were too expensive for the ordinary Sunday School. A wave of opposition spread over the field, especially among the Baptists; and Dr. C. R. Blackall, the editor of the Northern Baptist Convention, brought out a primary, a junior, and an advanced lesson course, independent of the uniform selections. His defense of this step before the International convention at St. Louis in 1893 met with angry rejoinders which Mr. Jacobs, as mediator, found it hard to control. For most of the fellowship, loyalty to the united convention movement and adherence to its lesson system seemed inseparable. At St. Louis the Lesson Committee's secretary, Dr. Randolph, defended the committee's methods with more than usual zeal.

The situation confronting Chairman Jacobs was becoming complex. Besides this unrest in the lesson field and his financial worries in Chicago, there was the International Primary Union, an organization independent of the Executive Committee but demanding a special session on the convention program and liable at any time to get out of hand. At the executive meeting and conference of leaders held at Chautauqua in August, 1892, a second independent organization, the Field Workers' Association, was launched. At St. Louis it held an all-day pre-convention session and organized, with Marion Lawrance of Ohio as president and Miss Mamie F. Huber of Kentucky as secretary. Among the workers thus organized a spirit was growing that regarded the doctrine of separate International conventions as an idle formality, that spoke of "The International Convention" as a permanent body, and that already was chafing under the dominance of what seemed the conservatism of the still all-powerful leader.

The force of state and provincial secretaries and field workers was by 1893 both large and strong.¹ Several

¹ Thirty-seven paid workers altogether, as estimated by Mr. Reynolds, with others on part time. Report, 1893, p. 158.

had been trained in the school at Springfield—later moved to Hartford—and, like George Hamilton Archibald of Quebec and E. W. Halpenny of Ontario, were enthusiastic promoters of child-centered primary teaching and other advances of the day. Illinois, led by Professor H. M. Hamill, was stressing normal teaching; Nova Scotia, grading and supplemental lessons; New York, the home department and normal classes on the Chautauqua model; and New Jersey was arranging for a primary teachers' summer school. The New England states had adopted the new Blakeslee lessons, repudiated elsewhere, and the first employed primary field worker, Miss Bertha F. Vella, was at work in Massachusetts. Missouri at St. Louis, and Kentucky at Louisville, had effected city-wide house-to-house visitation. Twenty-three of the fields published Sunday School association papers. Mr. Porter reported that fifty-one fields had gathered and sent in their own reports. The leaders of this extensive organization now keenly felt the need of continuous central support.

At the eighth and ninth conventions, held respectively in Boston (1896) and Atlanta (1899), steps were taken to consolidate the International work. Boston saw the reorganization of the International Primary Union. Its unit was changed from the local primary union to the primary work of each state and provincial association. Within the committee representing these units a central committee was formed, which chose as its chairman the New Jersey worker and Pennsylvania primary superintendent Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes. The field workers, tired of finding themselves the mere appendix of the Chautauqua executive meetings, held at Louisville, in 1897, an annual conference of their own and another at Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1898. Over this move serious friction developed with Mr. Jacobs. At Atlanta the matter was settled by the association becoming the Field Workers' Department of the International Convention,

retaining nevertheless its essential freedom of action. The International Primary Union likewise at Atlanta changed its name, becoming the International Primary Department.

Normal work, now called teacher training, became the first activity of this newly Internationalized department for primary work. Twenty-five years before, in 1874, a group of workers had planned a series of normal manuals on a common outline, to train teachers for the new uniform lessons. Out of this came a Baptist and a Presbyterian textbook and a Methodist monthly normal magazine; and from the latter were evolved Hurlbut's *Teacher Training Lessons* and other drill-book texts. In contrast with these, the primary course of 1899, devised by Mrs. Barnes and her committee, was based on various texts, with a syllabus in which ideas and viewpoints were stressed rather than outlines of fact. Hundreds were enrolled in this course and supervised in their work, some to graduation.²

Notwithstanding hard times in 1893 and later, with funds so low that Mr. Reynolds was for months kept busy in financial solicitation, field service was enlarged. In 1895 an able and well trained negro, the Rev. L. B. Maxwell, began work among his people in the South; Hugh Cork was sent to cover the Northwest; and Dr. Hamill, borrowed from the Illinois association, made extensive tours through the Southern states. Mr. Porter withdrawing, the statistics for 1896 and 1899 were gathered by M. D. Byers, Mr. Jacobs's secretary. In November, 1897, Mr. Reynolds, while at work in Kentucky, died after a few days' illness; and his field work was taken over by Dr. Hamill. The World's Third Sunday School Convention held in London, 1898, involving another noteworthy gathering for ten days of American Sunday School workers on the *Catalonia*, further cemented ties of fellowship

² Convention reports, Denver 1902, p. 195; Toronto 1905, p. 457.

and understanding. The difficulties of Mr. Jacobs's financial position, with widespread criticism of his alleged conservatism and dominating ways, had led, some months before the Atlanta convention, to a general understanding, and he acquiesced in the selection of a new executive chairman.

This was no easy problem. Strong men were in the executive group—Hartshorn of Massachusetts, Dr. George W. Bailey of New Jersey, later of Philadelphia, who as chairman of finance had brought up the treasury to Boston with bills paid and a balance and repeated his feat at Atlanta, A. B. McCrillis of Rhode Island, John R. Pepper of Tennessee, John J. MacLaren of Ontario, and several others. But none of them accepted nomination. Mr. Jacobs himself presided at the committee's sessions throughout the convention. The choice of his successor fell on John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, who in 1895, at Mr. Reynolds's instance, had taken the state presidency in Pennsylvania with noteworthy results, and who at much inconvenience had attended and addressed the Boston convention. He however later declined and the old leader acted as chairman for most of the triennium. Mr. W. N. Hartshorn, the second vice chairman of the executive committee, became chairman of the program committee to arrange for the tenth convention at Denver in 1902. As general secretary for the International work, an office recommended by Mr. Jacobs in 1890, the committee called Marion Lawrance from his ten-years' effective general secretaryship in Ohio. The creation and filling of this office mark the virtual establishment of an International Sunday School Association.

The ensuing triennium was a period of transition from the old era of the convention movement to that of the continuous International Association. The new secretary, formally elected by the new executive committee in May, began work on July 1, 1899. His letterhead

bore the caption, "International Sunday School Convention," alongside the notice of the coming convention of 1902. The delicate relations between the new officer and the impetuous field secretary, Dr. Hamill, were carefully defined by the executive committee and published to the field. Mr. Lawrance handled an increasing volume of office detail, but most of his time was given to travel and visitation. With two great tours, the Northwestern of 1900 and the Transcontinental of 1901, each with able volunteer aid, and with additional field work by Mr. Maxwell and several others, auxiliary organization was promoted as never before. Lawrance alone traveled over seventy-five thousand miles during the triennium, visiting nearly every field; and at Denver every one of the states, territories, and provinces except Indian Territory, Alaska, Assiniboia, and Saskatchewan was reported organized, with forty-one fields reporting sixty-four full-time and twenty-one part-time workers. Following the Transcontinental Tour, however, Hamill withdrew to become superintendent of teacher training for his denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church South; and in March, 1902, Maxwell died. On June 23, in Chicago, Mr. Jacobs also passed away. Three days later, when the Tenth International Sunday School Convention opened in Denver, Mr. Lawrance and his stenographer constituted the entire International force.

Two major issues confronted the delegates at Denver. One of these was the approval of the Lesson Committee's issuance in 1901 of a one-year course for beginners and of its proposed issuance of a two-year course of advanced Bible lessons for college students and others desiring to progress beyond the uniform course. Dr. Hamill offered resolutions providing for the approval of these courses as optional but stipulating that they be not called International. The primary forces met in a "Western School of Methods" before the convention and asked that the beginners' course be approved and

extended to two years. The content of the advanced course strongly resembled the courses of the American Institute of Sacred Literature. The convention movement was thus, for the first time, asked to sanction a break in that "glorious" uniformity of lesson selection which it had established at Indianapolis thirty years before. How it met this issue will be told in Chapter VIII.

The other issue was the choice of Mr. Jacobs's successor. The glowing tributes to his memory with which the sessions had opened made all realize that the decision was fateful; but how fateful it really was none could then foresee. Mr. Hartshorn, chairman of the program committee, seemed to be the logical choice, but some felt that his visionary and emotional nature unfitted him for this great responsibility. He was finally nominated by the executive committee which was newly constituted for the triennium, and he was elected with great enthusiasm for the new era of progress. A resolution by J. J. MacLaren of Ontario requested the executive committee to report to the next convention its recommendations as to "adoption of such a name as The International Sunday School Association," and of a constitution, by-laws, and incorporation.

The new International leader had begun his career as a worker on the *Youth's Companion*, married its proprietor's daughter, started with her in 1883 a noted primary class in the Ruggles Street Baptist Sunday School, Boston, and in 1887 was made the Massachusetts member of the International Executive Committee. He was active in the International Primary Union, organized in 1884. In 1889 and in 1898, he managed the tour of the American delegations on a chartered steamship to the World's convention in London. In November, 1889, he and Franklin P. Shumway reorganized the Massachusetts Sunday School Association, and he became chair-

man of its executive committee. His qualifications and wide friendships thus well fitted him for this position.

The caution shown by Mr. Jacobs in avoiding any move likely to awaken denominational self-assertion was now thrown to the winds. The new chairman, incapable of imagining opposition from any quarter for so manifestly divine a cause as the unified leadership of the Sunday School, accepted what he characterized as God's call to take up and carry forward the work. Lawrance, also warmly temperamental, stood with him. The greatly improved field organization and the continued capable financial management of Dr. Bailey promised a larger and more dependable income. The outlook at Denver was promising for advance. As Mr. Hartshorn saw it, not only must "The International Convention" realize itself in a continuous and expanding service, but it must find and serve every need of the Sunday School. It must seek recognition and develop adequate income through wide and vigorous publicity, including an imposing headquarters building. There could be no limits to its jurisdiction. Whatever differences of opinion and viewpoint its progress might uncover could all be resolved in frank and brotherly conference. As its sole aim was the upbuilding of the Sunday Schools of the denominations, it must and would win from these full approval and support.³

In creating a staff to execute this policy, the chairman's first step was to secure, as International primary superintendent, Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes of Newark, New Jersey. Since 1895 she had been primary superintendent for the Pennsylvania association, and its president, Mr. Wanamaker, was extremely reluctant to have

³ In *Nelson's Cyclopedia*, under "International Sunday School Association," I gave a brief outline of Mr. Hartshorn's policy, substantially as here; and in a cordial letter of comment he told me that he had no idea I understood him and his policies so thoroughly.

her go. Since the Boston convention, 1896, she had also been chairman of the International Primary Department's central committee, working vigorously, though Internationally a volunteer. Accepting the appointment in October, 1902, she began her five and a half years of eventful service on January 1, 1903, retaining her Newark residence. Mr. Lawrance likewise retained his residence at Toledo. The general secretary's headquarters were not transferred to Chicago until May, 1907.

In November, 1902, Chairman Hartshorn's deep interest in the Sunday School work of the negroes of the South was expressed in the appointment of Dr. James E. Shepard as field superintendent of work for negroes, with George G. Marcus as additional field worker. Professor Marcus died in 1904; Dr. Shepard retired at the Louisville convention of 1908. These workers sought to aid the Sunday School workers of their race by setting up state and county associations, holding institutes, and making field addresses on lines parallel to the white Sunday School association work. Their labors were supervised by an International committee composed mainly of Southern men. The work begun in 1895 by Maxwell was thus continued.

In April, 1903, an Illinois field worker, William C. Pearce, was added to the staff; and in August of that year he was made the International teacher-training secretary. In July, 1903, another Illinois worker, Mrs. Mary Foster Bryner, under a gift from *The Sunday School Times*, visited Mexico; and after most acceptable service at the capital and later in other Mexican localities, she remained as a field worker on the International staff; which thus, at the convention in Toronto, 1905, consisted of five members and three office assistants.

In August, 1903, the chairman, in connection with the annual executive meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana, summoned a conference representing widely divergent viewpoints to discuss the newly organized Religious Edu-

cation Association, the coming World's Convention at Jerusalem, the lesson issues raised at Denver and other items. The bitter disputes that here arose showed the need of adding to the leadership of laymen and platform-trained staff workers such educators as had so recently rallied around President W. R. Harper at Chicago. The executive committee, therefore, in addition to naming a teacher-training secretary from its staff, created a committee on education, including Presidents W. O. Thompson of Ohio State University and E. Y. Mullins of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Dr. M. G. Brumbaugh of Pennsylvania, and several progressive members of the executive committee; with Dr. Howard M. Hamill, now a denominational leader of teacher training, as chairman. Mr. Lawrance, Mrs. Barnes, and Mr. Pearce, as advisory members, were active in the committee's work.⁴

Beginning work that December, the new committee, with hearty denominational approval, drew up a simple standard for the teacher-training work of the twenty-eight states and provinces reported by Mr. Pearce as conducting training departments. These had their own divergent textbooks and courses, which they promoted vigorously in the Sunday Schools, selling books, registering classes, conducting examinations, and issuing their own certificates and diplomas.⁵ At Toronto Secretary Pearce reported forty-three states and provinces with training departments, and the recorded number of students for the triennium was nearly thirty-five thousand. The larger denominations had already provided a service of teacher training for such of their people as chose to work under denominational lead, J. L. Hurlbut for

⁴ On September 1, 1904, I was added to this committee and continued a member under the Association and the Council until 1925.

⁵ New York State in 1893 published its own textbook, *Hurlbut's Revised Normal Lessons*, printed for it by Hunt and Eaton, the agents of the Methodist Book Concern.

the Methodists, H. M. Hamill for the Methodists South, B. W. Spilman for the Southern Baptists, J. A. Worden for the Presbyterians, A. L. Phillips for the Southern Presbyterians, Robert Cowden for the United Brethren. But many of the texts used were of undenominational origin, and schools were left free to follow their county and state leaders whenever they so pleased. All the work was of the simple drill-book type, with emphasis on memorized outlines.

Divergent denominational usage in the names and age limits of the recently organized departments of the Sunday School was a serious problem in 1903, especially for field workers interested in Sunday School gradation. This problem the committee promptly faced. After extended inquiry as to usage, made by Mr. Lawrance, an arbitral report was accepted by the executive committee in 1904 and departmental names and ages were fixed until 1917.⁶ International approval of training texts was likewise undertaken. To these and other determinations the denominational leaders yielded a prompt and apparently a grateful acquiescence.

In the three years that began with the convention at Toronto, 1905, and ended with that at Louisville, 1908, the International policy of vigorous, conspicuous, and superdenominational leadership moved forward on many lines. Income grew, as men of means were enlisted in support of some appealing specialty. The staff was enlarged, its functions were broadened, and through the county, state, and provincial links its educational program was carried into the Sunday Schools. Among the important advances that marked this halcyon period of unchallenged service were:

⁶ Beginners, 4, 5; primary, 6-8; junior, 9-12; intermediate, 13-16; senior, 17-20; adult, 21 up. Some denominations had called the third and fourth departments intermediate and junior, transposing the names. Beyond the first three ("the elementary grades") there was in 1904 no experience available by which to determine proper departmental limits.

1. Creation, under Mrs. Barnes's lead, of outlines for a nine-year elementary graded lesson course for pupils from four to twelve years of age.

2. Leadership of the movement for adult class organization. Already strong in New York and Illinois, a committee to lead it was named at Toronto; and in January, 1907, Mr. Pearce was made its superintendent, carrying this as well as his work in teacher training. At the Louisville convention he reported over sixteen hundred International certificates of standard organization awarded by state and provincial associations to classes in local Sunday Schools.

3. Start of work for intermediates. In August, 1906, Frank L. Brown of Brooklyn, with Frank Woodbury of Nova Scotia and other early laborers in this field, was assigned to this hitherto ungraded and little studied age-area of the Sunday School. His report at Louisville showed rapid progress in field organization for intermediate service. The leaflet issued by this committee showed thirty-nine character-making organizations, mostly for boys, already at work. Denominational interest was confined to the issue of intermediate lesson helps; and senior work, for those from sixteen to twenty, was not yet unitedly undertaken.

4. Substitution for the negro field work, which had proved a failure, the policy of training Sunday School leaders through normal courses in schools, colleges, and seminaries for negro students.

5. Retirement of the Field Workers' Association as a department. After holding several conferences, continent-wide and regional, it decided to disband, turning over its work to Mr. Lawrance and a committee of the executive. International leadership was thus further centralized.

6. Continuance by the Committee on Education of its work of standardization. The Louisville convention learned of nearly eighty thousand training students en-

rolled by forty-eight associations, with over ten thousand graduates of the one-year course, and in addition 28,491 students, with 2,126 graduates, reported from four denominations whose standards the committee had approved. At a conference in Philadelphia, January 7 and 8, 1908, presided over by Dr. Brumbaugh, eighteen officers of ten denominations sat with the International officers, members of the committee, and auxiliary officers. They agreed upon a revised standard defining the "First" and "Advanced" courses of fifty and one hundred lessons respectively, each course independent of the other. In accordance with this action, Dr. Hurlbut and the Methodist Book Concern at once recast their very popular manual to make fifty lessons instead of forty; other leaders likewise conforming.

7. Advance in world organization. So great was the success of the enterprising World's Fourth Convention at Jerusalem in April, 1904, that at the Fifth, held at Rome, 1907, organization was effected of the World's Sunday School Association, under joint British, Continental, and North American leadership. Dr. George W. Bailey of Philadelphia, already a moving spirit in this great evangelical and missionary enterprise, now became its executive chairman, retiring from the International treasurership. The new treasurer was Fred A. Wells of Chicago.

8. Formal start of the International Association. The Toronto convention, after a discussion and amendment, adopted the report of its committee on the Executive Committee's report. The first item read: "That the name of this body be changed from 'Convention' to 'Association' is recommended, and that proper steps be taken for incorporation."

The convention thus recognized itself as a continuing body, leading the Sunday School forces of the continent, including the denominational agencies, through an executive committee that was now in effect a permanent

board. It could not then foresee that the move to incorporate, so cheerfully endorsed, involved the early and irrevocable transfer of its legislative power to this board, nor the effect of this transfer upon the committee and the denominations.

Promptly accepting this mandate, the chairman and his committee, with legal assistance, forwarded the details incident to incorporation by act of Congress; and on January 31, 1907, their bill was approved. The charter thus granted is inserted in the printed report of the Louisville convention; but so far as the minutes go it was reported to the convention only by incidental reference. Much important convention business was done, including election of officers and executive committee under the new charter, adoption of the Lesson Committee's graded lesson recommendations, and election of the new Lesson Committee. The Louisville convention still felt itself to be, with undiminished powers, the International Sunday School Association.

Yet there stood the charter, with whose terms most or all of the delegates were undoubtedly familiar. The United States Congress had decreed that sixteen men "and their associates and successors are created a body corporate in the District of Columbia under the name of The International Sunday School Association," with various powers. Section 3 provided "that the members of the executive committee, as it may be constituted by said association, shall be the members of this association"; and Section 4 added "that the affairs of the association shall be managed by the members." Not a word in the charter referred to the convention. The body that had been incorporated was the executive committee, which was now the association, competent to manage all International affairs. This outcome was inevitable. A convention or other indefinite constituency cannot be incorporated: there must be a membership enrolled by name. The substance of the charter could hardly have

been otherwise. But there was not a sign that one delegate at Louisville realized how far the old power of the International Convention had passed away.

With this step the International leaders filled up the sum of their provocations. The halcyon years were over. For half a century denominational officers had rested in the assurance that the leadership of the cause, unlike the former leadership of the Union, was vested in a great democratic convention. Even when this innocuous overlord developed into a continuing body and entered fields that any denomination might well claim for itself, most of the denominational leaders continued friendly and recognized the Association's care not to trespass on Bible interpretation and other functions still exclusively their own. But control by a convention and control by an incorporated board of managers were two different things. Would this board have self-restraint enough to go softly with its new power? The future was soon to show.

A month before the Louisville convention met, things began to happen. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church abolished its easy-going old Sunday School union, and the joint function of lesson editor and Sunday School secretary which had been successively held by Bishop Vincent, Dr. Hurlbut, Dr. T. B. Neely, and Dr. John T. McFarland. Retaining Dr. McFarland as editor, the Conference set up "The Board of Sunday Schools," in charge of two able and vigorous denominationalists, Dr. David G. Downey and Dr. Edgar Blake, who were determined that their great church should henceforth do its own standardizing and promoting of Sunday Schools, teacher training, and development of Sunday School specialization. It was a cloud the size of a man's hand. The vindication of Mr. Jacobs's fears and cautions was on its way.

In February, 1909, the new management of field workers' interests called and held for a week in Chicago

a secretaries' conference, which did much to unify field method and distribute courage and loyalty to the cause of community Sunday School service. But while these were meeting, the secretaries of the new Methodist board were formulating their demands; and their schools formed so large and active a part of the constituency that these demands when presented completely changed the field situation. To the state secretaries and their executive committees the new policy came with the force of a blow; and in our New Jersey committee, at least, the Methodist members seemed to resent it as keenly as any. As we understood the situation, we had to cease at once the promoting in Methodist schools of our new "ten points of excellence," because the Board had a standard of its own. Registration of Methodist adult and "teen-age" organized classes at state headquarters and issuance to these classes of International certificates of recognition must also cease. As to teacher-training, that was pre-eminently a denominational function; and henceforth all Methodist classes must be referred to the Board's Chicago office, which would advise with them as to courses, conduct their examinations, and issue to graduates the diploma of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It soon appeared, however, that the loyalty of thousands of Methodist workers to their county and state leaders, and their preference for united rather than denominational guidance were not to be so easily upset. At a joint conference held in Chicago, May 14, 1909, a compromise arrangement was effected, whereby state workers were free to register and serve all classes, except those of denominations desiring to do this for themselves.

This Methodist action formed but part of a general stirring of educational interest among the denominations during the triennium from 1908 to 1911, to which the summer schools and graded unions of the united work and the conventions of the Religious Education Association had largely contributed. The American Baptist

Publication Society called the Rev. H. T. Musselman from Missouri, as assistant editor and training leader. Southern Baptists similarly called the Rev. Hight C. Moore. The Congregationalists called to Boston the Rev. Benjamin S. Winchester, for joint service, principally educational. In other headquarters the policy of specializing educational as distinct from editorial Sunday School service was discussed and undertaken. In December, 1909, I left the New Jersey secretaryship and joined the Presbyterian staff. In 1911 the able Reformed editor, Dr. Rufus W. Miller, was joined by Dr. Conrad A. Hauser for educational service.

I found in the educational methods of the denominations an utter lack of unity and standardization. To further in my new fellowship such harmony as prevailed in state and provincial work, I consulted with my chief, Dr. Alexander Henry, and with Dr. Miller of the Reformed board, about a conference of denominational representatives interested in the Sunday School and religious education. They approved, and Dr. Downey added his cordial approval and a committee was formed. Invitations were sent out and at the Presbyterian headquarters in Philadelphia, June 30 and July 1, 1910, twenty officers of eleven denominations assembled. These organized "The Interdenominational Sunday School Council," which the following October, at the same place, completed its organization and took for its name "The Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations."

The new body, it was soon seen, met several needs. Members included the employed officers of denominational Sunday School boards and agencies of publication. Nineteen denominations were represented at the October meeting by fifty-nine delegates. The annual meeting time was fixed for January; which brought us again together at Nashville in January, 1911. Besides the general sessions, the Council worked in four sections, editorial, educational, extension, and publication. The

Sunday School Editorial Association, organized by Dr. Blackall in 1901, had drawn together in annual meetings the denominational editors and publishing agents; but the independents, with their rival circulations, were also there. Those meetings were then dropped; and the denominational editors and publishers found themselves partners in many lines of common effort. The extension members, responsible for missionary and colportage service to the outlying fields, also found much in common. In the educational section the new sense of denominational responsibility for the educational leadership of the Sunday Schools found expression. For the first time in the history of the North American Sunday School cause the denominations as such were acting together.

The relations were cordial between the new Council and its sections and the International Sunday School Association in matters of training, recognition of classes, and standard-making. Musselman and I were appointed to visit the International Association's executive conference at Winona Lake in August, to transmit and explain the denominational wishes; and a return delegation at Philadelphia in October was warmly received. The amenities were well maintained. But in the Council's constitution, and in the educational section's October statement of aims and plans, appeared the same purpose to make these now associated denominations, all together, and each for its own flock, the real leader of the Sunday School cause. No irresponsible, lay-managed association, however well intentioned, might any longer set up standards for denominations to meet, or impose upon denominational Sunday Schools a community-made program. The denominationally thinking men of the Council quietly but firmly took the helm.

Here was indeed an issue.

IV

FROM ASSOCIATION TO COUNCIL

IN the march of our story, the period of conflict has been reached which was to determine the issue, long foreseen, between the territorial and the denominational conceptions of general Sunday School leadership. Should the International Sunday School Association, or should the denominational Sunday School executives and staff workers, newly united in their Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, formulate the common program, standardize local procedure, and lead the way to new advance?

The triennium bounded by the International conventions of 1908 and 1911 witnessed, as has been stated, the development in the larger denominations of a new sense of responsibility for the educational leadership of their own Sunday Schools. Acquiescence in the headship of the International committee on education gave place to a growing restiveness. When the leaders met in Philadelphia, in 1910, those of International sympathy and training, of whom there were many, yielded to the spokesmen of strict denominationalism. The right of each denomination to control its own Sunday School work was emphasized, with recognition of the fact that much of this work could best be done by the denominations working together. No mention was made of any further area wherein any part of this common work might properly be done by coöperation organized from the field.

The Council held its first annual meeting at Nashville in January, 1911. It had still much to do in finding itself. At only a few points did it make International

contacts; and these were outwardly harmonious. The educational section approved the Chicago peace agreement of May, 1909, thus formally taking charge of denominational-Association relations. It also set up a standard of work for adult classes and began the creation of a joint denominational ten-point "standard of excellence" for Sunday Schools by reporting eight points common to the denominational standards then in use. In ratifying these actions the Council recognized its own educational section, rather than the International committee on education, as the standard-making agency for all schools included in its membership.¹

The Association on its part was not less busy. To meet the obviously growing hostility of some denominational leaders, it had already displayed in the Louisville convention report a series of resolutions offered by President E. Y. Mullins, defining the scope and value of the International work and showing with what care it refrained from encroachment on denominational functions. Now, in preparation for the San Francisco convention, its sense of gathering opposition was evidenced by two such documents: (1) a five-page statement of the Association's plan, scope, work, and relations, prepared with much care by Dr. Hamill and a committee, and (2) a characteristic circular offered by Mr. Hartshorn as the triennial report of his executive committee. The latter showed a train of seven cars and engine, each car labeled with the name of a denomination, designated "The International Sunday School System." The whole document was devoted to the argument thus pictorially expressed.

No such exculpatory attitude was taken by the group from the central states and Canada, who now dominated the International executive committee. Their interest lay in the new charter. Under its terms their committee's

¹ For details and verification of these and later Council proceedings, see the file of printed Council minutes.

authority to control the Association, and through it to lead the Sunday School work of North America, seemed assured. Nothing however could be done under the charter until by-laws had been adopted to give it force. Soon after the Louisville convention, the executive committee therefore named a committee, headed by the Ohio lawyer, William A. Eudaly, to draft by-laws for the government of the International Sunday School Association, now by charter identified with the executive committee. The other members were Andrew H. Mills of Illinois and George G. Wallace of Nebraska. Over this complex task many conferences were held, and not until March, 1911, was the full draft submitted to the Association's trustees. It was approved by them, and presented to the executive committee on the eve of the San Francisco convention, June 20 to 27, 1911, and adopted with enthusiasm.

In these by-laws the historic power of the convention to elect its officers and executive committee was maintained. To fix time and place for the next convention, however, and "all questions pertaining to the policy of the Association," were assigned to the committee. More significant still was Article Ten on the Lesson Committee, which was henceforth to consist of sixteen men elected by the executive committee and working under these interesting instructions: "Section 2. The powers and duties of the Lesson Committee shall be to select from the Holy Bible the weekly lessons, the Golden Texts, the Daily Readings, to determine the Lesson Titles, and issue the same without interpretation."

Since 1872 the powers thus assumed had been exercised by a large and representative convention. Neither at the start nor at any later time had it shown itself unequal to the task. All the issues thus freely and ably debated were henceforth to be on the lap of an incorporated board of managers, meeting behind closed doors. How and in what spirit would they handle the trust?

To this question, so vitally significant to every denominational lesson editor, the by-law just quoted gave an illuminating answer.² The framers of this by-law were rigid partisans on the current graded-lesson issues, as its text makes plain. The Lesson Committee, with all who followed its lead, were ordered back to the old lesson specifications of 1872.

When the Lesson Committee, in session during the convention, asked its new authority how far this by-law required them to recast their graded lesson plans, the Executive Committee began to realize that their powers might have limits other than those of the charter. They called into conference such lesson editors as were at hand: Rev. B. S. Winchester of the Congregationalists, Philip E. Howard of *The Sunday School Times*, Dr. H. M. Hamill and Dr. J. T. Mcfarland of the Methodists. I represented the Southern Methodist and the Presbyterian editors respectively. That conference seemed rather a hearing of culprits before a determined and hostile investigating committee. Despite their clear statements in defense of the graded lesson issues, the editors apparently made no impression on their opponents. In a later session the by-law's prohibitory features were vigorously reaffirmed concerning all courses of which the titles were still unannounced.

² A conference formed in 1906 by Mrs. Barnes, the International primary superintendent, had drafted for the Lesson Committee a nine-years' course of children's lessons. Reorganized in 1908, this conference continued work on the adolescent lesson courses. Denominational editors were deeply interested and gave the work much assistance. Graded lessons for the whole school being approved at Louisville in 1908, the Lesson Committee promptly revised and issued the courses, and some denominations published them. The first three courses, for ages four, six, and nine, reached the Sunday Schools in October, 1909; those for five, seven, ten, and thirteen a year later. Demand for them was unexpectedly great. They upset the old limited-lesson form and introduced at many points material from other than Bible sources. These innovations aroused widespread and bitter discussion, as will be stated in Chapter VIII.

General Secretary Lawrance reported at San Francisco notable and confident advance in International and World Association activity. Since Louisville, a staff of ten, traveling over six hundred thousand miles, had made more than twelve thousand addresses. Every province, and every state but four, had its general secretary. The state and provincial salaried workers numbered 154. These had under their care nearly a hundred and forty thousand training students, while denominational offices reported to the International office fifty thousand more. The office had issued six and a half million leaflets, certificates, and class emblems. More than twenty-five hundred counties were organized and holding annual conventions. At Washington, May 19 to 24, 1910, three thousand delegates from forty-five countries had met in a World's convention of phenomenal spirituality, enthusiasm, and creative force. The World Association was lending support to workers in eight countries and had sent Frank L. Brown on an organizing tour in the Far East, and Henry S. Harris on a like tour through South America.

The next three years, up to the time of the Chicago convention of 1914, saw these activities continued and further notable advances made. Mr. Hartshorn, elected president of the San Francisco convention, closed his fruitful nine-years' executive chairmanship and was succeeded by Fred A. Wells of Chicago. Camp grounds at Conference Point on Lake Geneva, Wis., were acquired by a friendly corporation; and there, in the summer of 1912, under Mr. Pearce's deanship, was held the first ten-day session of an International training school for field leaders, which is still maintained. In May of that year John L. Alexander came from Young Men's Christian Association and Boy Scout service, to develop and continue the work for what was now known as the secondary division, consisting of young people from thirteen to twenty. His first camp conferences at Conference

Point for older boys and older girls were held in the summer of 1914. Negro work through training classes in Southern schools and colleges, organized by Professor H. C. Lyman; city visitation under J. Shreve Durham, with thirty-one million people visited in the triennium; field work in the West Indies by the Rev. Aquila Lucas; splendid elementary leadership by Mrs. Bryner; work for missions, temperance, and purity by Rev. W. A. Brown, Mrs. Zillah Foster Stevens, and E. K. Mohr, respectively; the continued progress of adult class work under Mr. Pearce, and teacher training under Dr. Franklin McElfresh, were reflected in the advances reported from the more than 150 staff workers in state and provincial fields and their many thousand active voluntary helpers. The city institute or training school, foreshadowed in some of the better types of graded unions of the decade before, was begun on a college level by Professor Walter S. Athearn at Des Moines in 1911 and by 1914 it was widely adopted as a feature of city organization. The World's Association held a fine convention at Zurich, Switzerland, in 1913, and planned for another at Tokyo in 1916. When the hosts assembled at Chicago, June 23 to 30, 1914, the territorial fellowship, with an organization and a record like this, therefore felt itself secure.

Throughout the triennium the relations of the Sunday School Council with the Association were largely those of friendly coöperation. Its committee of seven on reference and counsel had conferences with the like committee of the Association, and also with American Sunday School Union officers on issues in the latter body's mission field. Some friction was eased and points of disagreement were frankly stated. At a full joint meeting of the Council and the International executive and field representatives, at Dayton, Ohio, in January, 1913, friendliness reigned. Among other results, a joint ten-point Sunday School standard, to be promoted in all

Sunday Schools, was completed and accepted. As adopted at Dayton, this called for a Sunday School to have (1) a cradle roll, (2) a home department, (3) organized Bible classes in the secondary and adult divisions, (4) teacher training, (5) graded organization and instruction, (6) missionary instruction and offering, (7) temperance instruction, (8) definite decision for Christ urged, (9) offering for denominational Sunday School work, and (10) workers' conferences regularly held.

Despite these amenities and this substantial coöperation, the Council firmly kept on its predetermined way. Its secretary, Dr. Henry H. Meyer, in his report, January, 1912, thus stated its position: "The general Sunday School movement has outgrown, or is rapidly outgrowing, its machinery for lesson making. The making of a course of study for the Sunday School is the chief and most important business of Sunday School boards, editors, and secretaries. . . . These men are, or ought to be, the real experts in this important field. To their wisdom should be added that of other specialists. . . . No organization or association, from the governing councils of which the official Sunday School leaders of the several churches as such are excluded, can possibly hope to furnish an adequate or acceptable channel for effective interdenominational coöperation in Sunday School work. . . . What has been said concerning lesson courses applies equally to all matters involving general policies, methods, and standards in the organization, administration, and educational supervision of the Sunday School."

In line with this deliverance a strong committee on courses of study was set up, which, after reiterating denominational rights, recommended continuance "for the present" under International lead, with formation by each denomination of a lesson committee of its own. Twelve such were reported in 1913. Determination to have a hand in lesson making was crystallizing fast.

At Dayton, in spite of Dr. Bailey's earnest plea for continued solidarity, the bonds uniting the American and British lesson committees were severed, wrecking world-wide uniformity of lesson papers and pictures on the mission fields, but leaving the American committee free to respond to the demands of its included denominations. These were now clearly voiced. At the Council meeting of January, 1914, several conferences with the Lesson Committee were reported, at which Council representatives had asked for such specific changes as departmentally graded lessons, to supplement the uniform series.

To meet this now urgent issue the Lesson Committee, with the Executive Committee's approval, called a general conference at Philadelphia, April 21 to 23, 1914. After full discussion of the lessons, uniform and graded, and of the function of lesson making, a joint committee reached a basis of reconstruction satisfactory to all, and unanimously insisted on retention of the historic name. The International Lesson Committee was to consist of eight persons named by the convention, eight named for the denominations at large by the Sunday School Council, and one named by each denomination that had a lesson committee of its own. Additional denominations qualified on this last point and these denominational lesson committees, as "lessons" expanded into a broad experience curriculum, have correspondingly developed the scope and originality of their work. The committee thus newly constituted met for organization on July 1, 1914, immediately following the Chicago convention.

In his executive report to the Chicago convention Chairman Wells acknowledged that his committee had had a hard three years. The reconstitution of the Lesson Committee, which he submitted for approval, was, he confessed, largely due to the committee's attempt to dictate to the denominations, through its Lesson Committee, what their lessons' form and content should be.

Lesson agitation however had formed but part of their troubles. The veteran Baptist editor, Dr. C. R. Blackall, had sharply attacked the committee for stripping from the convention, by means of their charter, the former's old legislative powers, especially as to the naming and instructing of the Lesson Committee. As the outcome of much prior conference, a resolution recognizing the convention's power was offered by the committee, seconded by Dr. Blackall, and, with the lesson agreement, adopted by the convention. As one exercise of this restored power, the convention raised its time-honored interval between conventions from three years to four. With its visible grievances thus happily adjusted, the Chicago convention adjourned, in anticipation of four years of peaceful progress.

But instead of peace came a great world war. First in Canada, then in the United States, the calls to the colors depleted men's classes, disorganized many a Sunday School and association, turned attention from religious education to the many forms of war work, and trained the leaders of church finance to think in terms of inflated budgets and intensive drives. In studying the quadrennium from Chicago to the Buffalo International convention of June, 1918, this background of the war must be kept in mind. On the whole the quadrennium registered notable progress for the Sunday School cause; but it also saw, on both sides of the field, such advances in leadership-power as made fellowship by concession and compromise increasingly impracticable.

The changes most widely felt in the Sunday Schools came through the work of the new Lesson Committee, which now satisfactorily represented the denominations and their ideals, and had in its enlarged membership some of the specialists whom its predecessors had called in from the outside. The committee completed the graded course, improved and extended to an eight-year cycle the uniform lessons, and began to issue three-year

cycles of "group-graded lessons" for the primary and junior departments, which a few denominational publishing houses accepted and used. Having in these and in the closely graded courses provided for the pre-adolescent departments, the committee felt free to adapt its uniform course more closely to the needs of older classes. When group grading was later extended to the intermediate and senior ages, the so-called uniform lessons became in effect a Bible course for young people and adults, which for these ages proved a distinct educational gain. The independent publishers, however, and some of the denominational houses, continued to meet the strong demand for uniformity within the school with primary and other quarterlies based on the often quite inappropriate uniform lessons. A group of Presbyterian and Reformed houses united in 1914 to issue an independent course of three-year departmentally graded lessons, modified from the closely graded series. This move coincided with the action of the Presbyterian (U. S. A.) house in withdrawing from the syndicate of graded lesson publishers, after bitter attacks upon the doctrinal and biblical character of the syndicated issues. To grade in three-year rather than one-year units better fitted conditions in small schools and those under inexperienced leadership; and the issuing boards recommended these lessons for all their schools. The evident need of this constituency for standard departments corresponding to these three-year cycles hastened the adoption by the Sunday School Council, in 1917, of the present departmental names and ages. As with each cycle the new syndicate's lesson lists were revised, its system grew more original, soon losing most of its relation to the International graded lists.

In teacher training the changes were quite as radical. Since 1911 Professor Walter S. Athearn of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, had been a member of the International committee on education. Besides writing

on city training schools,³ and on teacher training in denominational colleges, he read at Chicago, in a conference session, a paper giving the findings of a wide study of current training texts and methods, with the negative results in actual teaching efficiency thereby secured. Two years previously, Mrs. Barnes had shown the Executive Committee that the First Standard Course, with its one year of condensed drill work on the whole round of training studies, went pedagogically with the uniform lessons, and that the incoming graded lessons required a more educational type of training texts. Others also had long queried the value of the training work on which some of the fields set such store. But Athearn's clean-cut exposure of the facts made further temporizing with the situation impossible. The teacher-training committee of the Council set to work at once to draft a standard to supersede that jointly adopted in 1908. After much conference with the Committee on Education, this Council committee presented in 1916 and completed in 1917 a standard, requiring a course of 120 lessons in twelve units of ten lessons each, providing a first year course of forty lessons on topics of greatest general application, a second year also for all students in common, and a third year of divided specialization. The Council, in authorizing this, provided for a syndicate arrangement, to secure common texts on the several units, and set a date for the withdrawal of recognition for completion of old-standard texts. But such was the popularity of the latter that this date had to be extended several times.

The International leadership, during this wartime quadrennium, was reorganized for greater efficiency. Following the great Washington convention Mr. Lawrance became general secretary for the World's Association, American Section, in addition to his International task; and during the absences thus entailed Mr. Pearce, as

³ *The City Institute for Religious Teachers.*

his substitute, came more and more into control. After the Zurich convention Mr. Lawrance, acceptable everywhere but clearly overtaxed, returned on January 1, 1914 to full-time International service, Frank L. Brown succeeding him in the World's field. In 1916 the International work was resolved into the three departments of education, field work, and business, with Robert Cashman, Mr. Lawrance's former assistant, as business superintendent, and Mr. Pearce in full charge of work in the International field; each with a strong committee. Over the department of education was placed, without salary, Dr. Athearn the chairman of the Committee on Education, while Mr. Lawrance coördinated the work as a whole.

At the Fifteenth International Convention, Buffalo, June 19 to 25, 1918, results appeared to justify this reorganization. The business department reported income raised from \$47,000 to \$85,000 a year. The field department, with a staff of twelve, showed a broadened, improved, and better organized service, through the employed state and provincial leaders and an estimated aggregate of 268,000 voluntary officers. Under the educational department, besides the advances in lesson making just recounted, and those in teachers' and young people's training, a reinforced Committee on Education presented, in the educational features of the Buffalo program, a vigorous policy of territorialism in Sunday School leadership, as its answer to the denominational challenge.

The Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations, during this four-year period, likewise registered noteworthy advances. The same sessions which adopted the new training standard also adopted a standard and program for young people's work, which has formed the basis for the extensive young people's church-centered program since so vastly and happily developed. It changed the series of names and ages of the adoles-

cent departments from the two which had been theoretically fixed in 1904 to the three now prevailing: intermediates, 12 to 14; seniors, 15 to 17; young people, 18 to 24. For each of these age-groups it formulated aims, recommended a unified parish program, and outlined this in terms of pupil initiative and direction. In approval of college courses for voluntary Bible study, children's work, and adjustments as to common promotion of standards, the Council also marked progress, which was secured through friendly conference with the corresponding International groups.

Tension was nevertheless growing. At Chicago Dr. Downey had complained of the laxity which some state secretaries showed in fulfilling their part of the agreement as to interchange of training enrolments. In 1915 Dr. Blake brought before the Council the conduct of the World's Association in seeking support for its special objects from Methodist schools. The agitation that followed resulted in a reorganization of the American section of the World's executive committee, with representation of the Council and the foreign mission boards. When the associated work in Chicago and elsewhere, following wartime example, put on joint drives for World, International, state, and county funds, Methodist officials, it was reported, interposed to block the recruiting of their young people for the solicitation forces. State workers followed their understanding as to adjustments and opened training schools, only to meet new claims of jurisdiction and complaints of overstepped bounds. The state secretary faced an enlarged routine of approvals and exchanges of record; but when he sought contributions from the Sunday Schools he met the chilly attitude of denominational officials toward "these outside organizations."

In Canada harmony had for some years been secured through the presence on the provincial executive committees of denominational officials and representatives.

Early in the quadrennium war drains left the western provinces so weak that these officials took over the control, reorganizing each province as an interdenominational federation. Assuming the debts and replacing the employed staff with their own field men, they continued the territorial work under voluntary officers. By 1918 an inter-provincial council had been formed for British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, with Manitoba and other provinces considering whether or not to come in. This forced the International field committee to consider how far such a provincial organization could be recognized as an Association auxiliary. At their instance it was voted, at Buffalo, that any state or province might organize as it saw fit, provided it maintained the essentials of territorial organization. No mere federation of denominations could be recognized, without a delegated convention in which all evangelical Sunday Schools might be represented, with free nominations for executive committeemen. It does not appear that these Canadians intended only a federation: they seem rather to have aimed to include every agency on the field working for Christian education. They were particularly interested in the Young Men's Christian Association's all-round program for the training of boys, soon extended by the Young Women's Christian Association also for girls. Through the united study and prosecution of service thus made possible Canada has in this field most effectively pioneered.

In 1917 some Council members, not content with insistence on denominational rights in training schools under association auspices, proposed that the Council itself should promote such schools. In the meeting of April, 1918, a plan was worked out for a Council secretary on full time, with an office, to handle the now heavy load of Council business, and, obviously, to make possible also the campaign of field competition suggested the year before. The Council approved the plan in prin-

ciple, leaving action to its executive committee, if and when they should secure the needed support from the denominational boards. The International officers could of course view this act of approval only as a first step on the way to war.

In Dr. Athearn, however, the International forces had at this juncture a leader at home in the country's educational fellowship, an author and speaker of power, and a strategist and fighter capable, far-seeing, and unafraid. He was now director of a school of religious education at Boston University. At his instance, the Committee on Education was enlarged, to include several high authorities on educational specialization. He had been trained as a public school man and, as a Disciple, inherited a testimony against sectarianism. From the educational angle, he saw the same vision that Jacobs and Moody had seen from the angle of Bible-studying evangelism—a Christian community unitedly pursuing its shared ideals. For over half a century the Sunday School convention movement and the territorial organization had given this vision free and democratic expression. Now, as it seemed, this ideal must do battle for its life with the fundamentally different ideal of a group of denominations united for control of the field in their common interest, and, in each local area, a group of churches belonging to a list of recognized denominations, each church kept vividly conscious of its denominational relation, and all united in pursuit of such parts of their several programs as it might seem denominationally wise for them to share.

Realizing that no house so divided against itself could stand, and that if the issue were once publicly joined, it would tap large reservoirs of denominational loyalty, Dr. Athearn planned a campaign that should lead the territorial ideal to a complete victory. In his home city of Malden, Massachusetts, as a demonstration station, he organized a city council of religious education repre-

senting the community as a whole, and with it maintained for some years a training school, a weekday religious school, and other aids to city church life. Answering a book by Dr. B. S. Winchester, *Religious Education and Democracy*, he published in the same year, 1917, *Religious Education and American Democracy*, which demanded a democratically organized, nation-wide system of religious schools, training agencies, and supervision, parallel to and complementing, but separate from, the state system and resting on the Protestant religious community. This parallelism he figured in a striking diagram.

At the Buffalo convention Dr. Athearn, with Dr. Moses A. Honline, presented this and other features of the International position; and in a series of educational conferences he planned for a frank facing of the issues between the "democratic," territorial, and the "official," denominational, conceptions of control and promotion in local religious education, seeking for the latter viewpoint full and responsible representation. The educational addresses of the convention were published under his supervision in a series of eight International bulletins, supplementing the convention report. They vigorously expressed the International position, as defined by the leader and approved by his committee and the Executive Committee.

As a personal action, Dr. Athearn followed these moves by printing in a weekly an article, "Organized to Defeat Democracy: Shall the American Sunday School be Prussianized?"⁴ In this he vigorously attacked what he counted as attempts recently made to establish denominational control of the Sunday Schools. The presentation seemed exaggerated and needlessly provocative, but it represented his sincere convictions; and the discussions it aroused deflected denominational attention and for the time made impossible the suggested Council plans.

⁴ *The Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, Sept. 28, 1918.

Throughout these times of grim moves and counter-moves in the inner circles, the vast Sunday School constituency had no thought of schism among the forces, much less of open war. Those who did understand the gathering struggle for dominance felt sure that in a cause so Christly as that of the Sunday School unity must be possible. Mutual relations, however strained, were still open to negotiation. So indeed it proved. The time for a common quest of peace rather than power was at hand.

The International Association took the first step. In April, 1918, the Council took serious exception to the International program of religious education as recently submitted to its executive body by the Committee on Education. To head this off before ratification by the convention in June, they proposed a conference between seven named by them and a like committee of the Association. The outcome of the discussion thus secured was that the Executive Committee, meeting at Buffalo during the convention, after citing the needs of the hour, resolved that they would join the Council "in the consideration of immediate steps . . . looking toward the early and effective coöperation of these two religious-educational agencies." They added: "That in view of the importance of larger plans for community religious education, such as proposed by the program under discussion, we concur in the immediate appointment of a joint committee of five members from this Committee and an equal number from the Council of Evangelical Denominations, to work out a mutually satisfactory plan for community religious instruction and report back to the executive committees of the two organizations at the earliest possible moment."

The Council's executive committee, meeting three weeks later, also adopted these resolutions and named its committee. The numbers were later increased to seven each and finally to nine. With the constitution of this joint committee, creation of "the merger" was begun.

All however was not yet peace. Each side continued its struggle for position. Following Buffalo, the Association issued its eight bulletins defining its aggressive position, withdrawing the fourth on the community-wide form of local organization, "the Malden plan," in deference to denominational protests, but maintaining its claim to general leadership of the field. In January, 1919, the Council considered a plan, reported by Dr. Blake, for reorganization of the International field and program under Council leadership, another, reported by Dr. Winchester, for standardizing local organization, with the churches as units in place of the community-based Malden plan, and a presidential address by Dr. Lester Bradner which, from a churchman's viewpoint, vigorously replied to the arguments of Dr. Athearn. The teacher-training committee, also, reported an incursion into the International field which incidentally revealed what the gains of unity might be.

In August and September, 1918, the Council through a committee, with extra help from its part-time secretary, Dr. George T. Webb, conducted a continent-wide drive of circularization and field work for the promotion of teacher training under its newly established standard. The denominational field agents, with the state and provincial secretaries, were called together in a series of seventeen regional conferences, attended by 180 employed workers. Many of these workers, it was discovered, though laboring in the same field, did not know one another. Association work was well represented; and for this the committee expressed appreciation. Not only did no friction appear, but in the meetings the need for better team work was strongly expressed. While training was promoted, this anticipation of field coöperation was the most significant outcome of the plan.

With the 1919 meeting of the Council, its long campaign for control of the Sunday School leadership of North America came to an abrupt end. The program of

advance, planned by Dr. Blake's committee, called for coöperation from the other field forces. It recognized that the Sunday School was now but one of the constituents of a broadened concept, the church school, and that some changes of promotional organization were inevitable. Reluctant as each side was to concede any advantage, both saw that radical compromise of some sort was a duty owed the cause. The wisdom and patience of the joint committee, with God's grace, must now find the way.

Early in March, 1919, this committee met for two days in Buffalo and agreed on the principles which the new organization must recognize and follow. Two weeks later, in Detroit, it met again and drew up plans in detail, with forms of constitution for the bodies concerned. This "Detroit agreement" provided for:

1. Reorganization of the International executive committee upon the basis of an equal number of territorial and denominational members.
2. A like reorganization of the executive committees of the state and provincial auxiliaries.
3. Constitution of the conventions, state, provincial, national, and international, as delegated bodies.
4. Enlargement of the Sunday School Council to include the employed officers of the International Association and its state and provincial auxiliaries.

Two general bodies were thus planned, one executive, to carry on the united work, with territorial and denominational membership in exact balance; the other professional and consultative, also substantially in balance, for the making of a common program of action. The second point met the denominations' demand that the field organizations through which their churches were served should, like the two overhead bodies, be half denominational: the third met the International demand that the conventions be safeguarded as organs of free

territorial expression. With fears thus set at rest, the committee's preamble voiced the Christian spirit and high hopes that animated both groups of conferees.

The International staff promptly submitted this agreement to the auxiliaries for ratification. Much discussion likewise took place in the counsels of the denominational boards. On June 25 and 26, 1919, in Cleveland, the International executive committee and the Council, meeting simultaneously, received the reorganization plan and faced its issues in close discussion. The International body reported to the Council that it was ready to adopt the agreement in full, and that all its auxiliaries but one had ratified and were willing to change their constitutions as specified.

The Council found itself divided. Southern Baptists and Southern Methodists emphasized denominational rights, called for postponement, and voiced the reluctance of large sections of these great constituencies to any recognition of the territorial associations. Dr. Downey, on the other hand, offered this resolution, which later action made historic: "The Council expresses the conviction that the time is ripe not merely for the reorganization of the International Sunday School Association and the Sunday School Council, but for a complete merger of both these organizations, under a new charter and with a new name, and with a membership and duties defined and determined after mutual consultation."

The outcome of the Council meeting was general approval of steps so far taken, and all resolutions were referred back to the joint committee. International leaders made it clear that their approval was subject to limited control of the auxiliaries and also to ratification by the convention to meet in Kansas City in 1922. In January and February, 1920, the two bodies discussed and acted on the changes made in their constitution forms by the joint committee, and provided for simultaneous meetings of the reorganized Executive Commit-

tee and Council at Buffalo in June. A poll, taken by the committee, showed sentiment on both sides strongly favoring the projected bicameral union.

The bodies met and took up their respective tasks; but it was soon evident that the Downey resolution for a "merger" of Association and Council was the only workable solution of the problem of territorial and denominational unity. Both bodies therefore directed their conferees to proceed at once with plans to this end. These plans, as submitted to the Council in January, 1921, included these preliminary steps:

1. Reconstitution of the Association's committee on education and the parallel committees of the Council as one committee representing both bodies, with sub-committees on children's work and other specialties.

2. The Council Secretary, Dr. Webb, and the International General Secretary, Mr. Lawrance, to oversee the reorganization into councils of the auxiliary associations.

3. Retention of Council committees until their functions can be transferred to the new Committee on Education.

In adopting these recommendations, the Council and the Association provided for maintenance through a reconstituted educational committee of the program-building function. In these and other provisions they also provided for needful temporary procedure; and at all points they safeguarded this procedure from even the suspicion of partiality or preference.

The new Committee on Education, comprising sixty specialists in general and religious education, child life, and educational promotion, chosen and summoned by the joint committee, met at Buffalo on April 26, 1921. Under Chairman Athearn's lead it faced its responsibility, reorganized itself, took over and distributed its inherited tasks, and during the year, in spite of low funds, made progress toward a comprehensive report to be submitted to the Kansas City convention.

At Chicago, February 13 to 16, 1922, the Council and the Association brought their separated leaderships to a close. The title chosen for the new merged body was "The International Sunday School Council of Religious Education." The joint committee's plan for a separate executive committee as well as a separate committee on education was rejected, the Council itself being made the executive committee. The old Council's sectional organization and committees reappeared in a series of "professional advisory sections," covering children's, young people's, adult, field, editorial, publication, and other forms of specialization. The leaders on both sides gained in mutual confidence. The two field commissioners reported auxiliary reorganization complete in Canada, incomplete and doubtful in the South, and for the rest rapidly and hopefully under way. Constitutionally, the new unity was now ready for the convention's seal of approval. One major problem remained. Who should be the new organization's general secretary?

With wise foresight, the International executive committee had in 1920 retired on full pay the universally beloved general secretary, Marion Lawrance. He however continued as consulting general secretary in platform and other service until his death on the field, May 1, 1924. At the Council meeting just preceding this convention the joint committee completed its long and statesmanlike service by securing and presenting Hugh S. Magill, L.L. D., as the new secretary, a former Illinois legislator, and who as secretary of the National Educational Association had had unique experience for the task. The Council heartily ratified the committee's choice, the great convention ratified the merger, and a unified leadership for church-centered religious education in North America was at last assured.

V

THE NEW UNITY BEARS FRUIT

WHEN the convention at Kansas City, on Thursday, June 22, 1922, ratified the merger by which the International Sunday School Association and the Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations became the International Sunday School Council of Religious Education, conflict between territorial and denominational ideals in the Sunday School cause of North America came officially to an end. The new general secretary, Dr. Hugh S. Magill, was the executive of a council of nearly two hundred members, each representing some field or function of Sunday School service. It had a vigorous board of trustees, and the Council chairman was Dr. Robert M. Hopkins of the Disciples of Christ educational work. A committee on education of sixty members, under the chairmanship of Dean Walter S. Athearn, had presented a comprehensive report, facing current problems in education, and charting policies and advances for the coming years. Thus united, the forces of Sunday School progress, eternally militant, moved forward together.

It became clear however that ideal unity was not yet attained, even in the convention sessions. The Southern Baptists, with three other denominations of the former Council, were reported as declining to enter the merger.¹ But all continued their participation in the work of the Lesson Committee and support of its work. Many of

¹ Church of England in Canada; Lutheran, General Synod; United Evangelical. A fifth was reported as non-concurring, but came in the same day. The Lutherans (United Lutheran Church) and eleven additional denominations have since come in. The number concurring at Kansas City was thirty-one.

the Southern Methodist annual conferences were also opposed; and, in consequence, the lower tier of Southern state associations refused to ratify and change to the council status. When the merger resolution was formally moved by Dr. Downey, its original sponsor, and seconded by Marion Lawrance, an amendment was offered to change the wording of the title from "religious education" to "Christian education"; and after fervid oratory, it was carried by a heavy majority. As the vote was far in excess of the equitable state delegations, the chairman, President W. O. Thompson of Ohio State University, ruled that this was merely a recommendation to the Council and not a determinative convention action. But this ruling did not satisfy those who associated "religious education" with modernism and non-Christian faiths.

Significant also was the concern shown by Consulting Secretary Lawrance during the debate over the feelings with which, as he knew, many state officers regarded the merger. My own contacts fully confirm the veteran's sensing of the situation. He told of the struggles and prayers of that joint committee to find the way of unity, justice, and peace, and of the large concessions made by the denominational men. "Friends," he appealed, "we are never going to get anywhere if we maintain any hard feelings and imagine that the other fellow has gotten the best of us."

This plea, unfortunately, did not avail to drive from minds on either side the suspicions and antagonisms of years. The Canadians had little trouble in merging; but for some years the state secretaries trained under the Association found it hard to believe that in every official set-up the denominational men were not trying to gain for their side an effective control. As brotherhood in service grew and theories of sinister design became less credible, territorial men insisted that these denominationally trained men could not comprehend the ideal of a

democratic, convention-represented, religiously united Protestant community. Similarly, it took some denominational leaders a few years to realize that this ideal envisaged neither a new denomination nor a super-denomination; that the state and county councils, as reorganized on merger terms, were no longer "outside organizations" but parts of their own field system; that the denominational share of the new unity was one half and not the whole; and that aloofness of their churches from county and state council work, with resultant weakness of coöperative power, was primarily a task and field for them.

In the midst of this atmosphere of mingled feelings stood the new secretary and his board of trustees, with the staff inherited from the Association. Not in the least had merger proceedings interrupted the latter's activities; though post-war distractions had curtailed income, and resignations had reduced the force. The old Council had had no staff but its part-time secretary, Dr. Webb, who now continued as a Canadian Baptist official. The Association had, besides the office force at the Mallers Building in Chicago, Mr. Lawrance; A. M. Locker, school principal, state secretary, and now business manager and field superintendent; Mrs. Maud Junkin Baldwin, superintendent of children's work; the Rev. E. W. Halpenny, superintendent of adult work; J. Shreve Durham, superintendent of home visitation campaigns; and, in the young people's department, John L. Alexander and his assistants, Robert A. Waite and Preston G. Orwig, with their chairman and backer William H. Danforth, a St. Louis manufacturer. The busy educational department had had for two years as superintendent, George Platt Knox, an able school man, now leaving for a professorship. Over this force, wholly developed under territorial ideals and entrenched in field loyalties and institutional power, the secretary took control, to realize denominational, as well as territorial hopes and ideals.

With gaps as noted in the lines of support, and with a treasury deficit of over \$22,000, it was well for the cause that Dr. Magill, a persuasive speaker, a statesman with legislative training, a secretary of four years' national experience, and a man of diplomatic manners and methods, had also high courage and an iron will.

Over against the state and International force stood what had now become the equally numerous force of the denominations. These men and women, for the most part of recent university training, secure in income and freedom from administrative worry, sent freely to meetings at their boards' expense, and united in an allied series of loyal and well disciplined commands, naturally proved more available timber for the Council's extensive and responsible committee service than the business men and informally trained staff workers of the impecunious state councils. The latter, on the other hand, were experts in field organization and kept in touch with all types of Sunday School work. Their consequent preference for old names and methods and reluctance to adopt radical reconstructions in church-school procedure made them often the conservatives of the consulting group. Considering all the circumstances of those years that followed the merger, how a fairer balance could have been kept between the previously separate forces it is not easy to see.

Of all the features of the new International leadership the most promising for freedom, efficiency, and progress was the series of professional advisory sections. These parallel groupings of specialists met usually in connection with the annual Council meeting in February, uniting in each free, self-organized conference all who had for that specialty a direct concern. Foreshadowed in the sections of the old Council, specified in the merger agreements, and developed and interpreted in their significance by the Committee on Education in its 1922 report,

the list of sections was, in 1925, enlarged to fifteen;² and each was given one representative on the Committee on Education and directed to report its findings and recommendations thereto.

The new engineer now opened his throttle; and the big, untried combination began, amid squeaks and jars, to overcome its inertia, get under way, and move forward to its destination. Discouragement over the financial shortage was balanced by hope of new income direct from the denominational agencies. The secretary could not, of course, replace the staff with members of his own choosing; but he could and did rebuild it progressively, in harmony with those ideals of quality and advance, which men of all viewpoints expected him to follow.

His first concern was with the management of the office and the International finances. Mr. Halpenny retired to a state secretaryship. Relieving Mr. Locker as business manager, and continuing him as superintendent of field work, Dr. Magill called his former office manager, Ray S. Erlandson, from the National Educational Association service, to put the Council's accounts and affairs on an orderly and efficient footing. Mrs. Baldwin resigning in October, 1923, the secretary was able within his narrow budget limits to install in November H. Shelton Smith, Ph. D., as superintendent of education. Fresh from studies under Dr. Weigle at Yale, Dr. Smith proceeded to put the Council's whole training program under those higher standards which the large denominations were now in their own work seeking to maintain.

In the young people's department the situation proved

² Children's work, young people's work, adult work, directors of religious education, denominational editors, denominational publishers, international and national executives, state and regional executives, city executives, professors of religious education, laymen, weekday education, vacation schools, leadership training, negro work. The list has remained flexible, with some sections dropped or combined and new sections added.

less easy to handle. Canada, in the years preceding the 1922 convention, had, substantially under merger conditions, developed a strong, successful, and popular all-round program of adolescent training. She had also installed, as general secretary of her Canadian Religious Education Council, an active exponent of this program, Percy R. Hayward, whom Mr. Lawrance at Kansas City had included as in effect a member of the International staff. To install him alongside Dr. Smith, as International young people's superintendent, would have been a timely and strategic step, consonant with the new program. But, as the secretary and his business manager already had cause to know, the young people's department, under Alexander's firm and resourceful management and Danforth's steady and complete underwriting, was in effect an independent concern. Since 1914 it had conducted at Conference Point annual summer camp conferences for older boy and girl leaders of the International young people's program; and to these it had added four others at the International camp grounds in New Hampshire and Colorado. Here, under their beloved leaders, hundreds of devoted young people had spent ten happy and fruitful days, taking the camp's four-year course with its interim readings and study and its prescriptions for the needed supplying of mental, physical, social, or religious lacks. Many graduates of the camp course had become adult leaders for their state young people's work. The tribal loyalty of all these to "Kinjigissis" (Mr. Alexander's Indian name) was carefully fostered. Large scholarship funds for needy campers had been gathered; and these Mr. Alexander, with Scottish astuteness, had held from the International treasury under his personal control. The originality and efficiency of the Alexander training system was not denied, nor the capability and devotion of its paid and voluntary representatives; but it was certainly not amenable to denominational wishes and under secretarial control.

During 1923 the issue became tense and was taken up by the trustees. At the Council meeting of February, 1924, matters came to a head. Partisan lines were drawn, the denominational heads heartily supporting the secretary, while many of the young people's workers stood with Alexander. Mr. Danforth's proposal was rejected that the department continue as an independent service foundation, auxiliary to the Council, using its camps and equipment and subject to its standards. Mr. Alexander and his two assistants were dismissed. Camp plans for the coming summer being already under way, it was agreed that Mr. Danforth's proposed foundation should conduct these, the Council lending all needed assistance, but that for later years the Council would conduct its own. On May 1, 1924, Dr. P. R. Hayward became International young people's superintendent. Mr. Danforth and his associates, as planned, organized the American Youth Foundation, secured camp sites in Michigan and New Hampshire, and, though deprived of International or denominational countenance or publicity, succeeded, in the years that followed, in holding loyal their clientele, conducting their summer camps and other enterprises, and going on with their work of training young people for Christian leadership and dedication to full-time service. The International camp conferences of 1925 and later, under Dr. Hayward's direction, overcame in a few years the setback of division, built up a new and loyal clientele, and have developed their own distinctive features of program.

On January 1, 1924, Mr. Erlandson issued the first Council year book. Plans were also made for the publication of a monthly Council magazine, recommended by Mr. Jacobs in 1890. In April Dr. W. Edward Raffety, editor of Baptist publications, joined the staff as editor of *The International Journal of Religious Education*, which made its appearance on the first of the following October. When the Council faced the naming of this

paper and the unwieldiness of its own name, the effort made at Kansas City to substitute "Christian" for "religious" was renewed; but in both cases the reasons for using the term "religious education" prevailed. From February, 1924, the Council's name was "The International Council of Religious Education."

Like disputes as to name featured the work of reorganizing the state and county associations. Some declined to drop "Sunday School" from their title. Others clung to "association," even while giving the denominations large representation. "Christian" replaced "religious" in several state titles. Pennsylvania, claiming to have fully complied with merger stipulations, retained its distinctive title as the "Pennsylvania State Sabbath School Association." As the years passed, experience revealed how much more was involved in the new status than a change of name.

First, as a rule, came a time of perfunctory steps, disturbed relationships, and slackened loyalties, with losses more manifest than gains. But as one church after another learned to think of its coöperative church-school relations as akin to those it carried denominationally, it transferred to its local and county council more of its training functions, and assumed a larger share of responsibility for the Council's management and support. The denominational field forces and programs were steadily pooled with those of the state council in an educational committee, in which by common consent the denominational officers took the lead. When it was also realized that the old territorial ideal of a united Christian community must be included as a factor in council life, the conditions of permanent and progressive reorganization were complete. This generalization of merger progress in the field for the ten years since 1922 may seem and for some fields doubtless is rather optimistic. On the whole, progress is steady; and the International staff is giving continuous and effective

leadership in the setting up of local, county, and state councils and the improvement of their work.

As the council system thus found itself, adjusted its strains, formed its new reflexes, and began to build and train its International and state leadership teams, it began also to develop a new creative power. Results far beyond the reach of either the territorial or the denominational forces, working separately, were achieved, reduced to working form, and sent down to the churches and communities. These results have been attained mainly in the fields of research, standards, curriculum, and young people's work. Under these heads, therefore, let us follow, for the remaining years, the story of the church-school movement in North America.

RESEARCH

As a factor of progress, research has appeared in the story of the Sunday School in connection with many of the inventive starts to be described later. Wherever the cause has found a creative center—at Gloucester in 1780, at Philadelphia in 1811, at Chicago in 1865, at Asbury Park in 1894—informal laboratories have been utilized, experiments made, results studied and generalized, and conservatives startled by the suddenness of the results that followed. These, however, were but episodes of the story. In the Sunday School company, research workers have ever been unpopular folk, and the good old way that saves trouble and lets vested interests alone has commended itself to the vast majority. Such enlightenment as would actually promote and subsidize research in the interest of reconstruction and educational progress did not prevail in the days of the Union, save for the work of the First and Second National conventions; nor in those of the convention movement, or the Association, nor yet among the denominations, so long as these labored each for its own flock. But it did form part of the vision of service which in 1922 was set before the

newly merged Council forces by the Committee on Education.

The project of a research bureau was submitted to this committee in 1921 by Dr. W. W. Charters, head of its section on research, measurements, and statistics. In April, 1922, he further urged its necessity. In February, 1924, the committee pressed on the Council the immediate need for this bureau, with twelve thousand dollars a year provided for its support. The Council approved; Dr. Magill found the money for one year's work; and in February, 1925, Paul H. Vieth was selected as director of research, to begin in June. Otto Mayer was added in 1928 as research associate, and all staff members co-operated as their respective specialties were concerned. This plan has been continued.³

The bureau's main attention has been given to the curricular problems we are later to discuss. In addition many practical studies have been made and embodied in bulletins, such as those on the director of religious education and on agencies in North America working for and with children. The problem of records and reports for the church school has been studied, with a view to securing methods and printed materials in harmony with modern educational ideals; and material has been released for local use. In recent years several of the denominations, following Council example, have set up research bureaus of their own.

STANDARDS

The idea of formulating a standard for the Sunday School was of slow growth. In preparation for the phenomenally progressive National Sunday School convention of 1832 a committee was appointed to prepare a manual to standardize Sunday School administrative

³ Dr. Vieth resigned September 1, 1931. For many staff changes not here mentioned see the file of International Council year books.

method; but they reported the task impossible, conditions being so diverse.⁴ In 1895 I drew up "ten points of excellence" for township Sunday School associations and used them in my New Jersey field work. This may have suggested to later standard makers the ten-point form. At the Toronto convention of 1905 the elementary workers, under the lead of Mrs. Barnes, adopted a six-point standard for the children's division; and W. C. Pearce, of the International staff, presented to the Field Workers' Department a digest of county organization which included "standards of excellence for the county, the township, and the individual school." A year later this department's executive committee formulated, as part of its standards of organization, a ten-point standard for the local school, which its president, E. A. Fox, reported in 1908 at Louisville.⁵ Realizing the value of this aid to progress, the state secretaries promptly adapted the idea to conditions in their respective fields. The custom spread, the frankly promotional aspect of the committee's standard being changed to something more educational.⁶ In 1910 the denominations took it up; and I aided in drafting the standard for Presbyterian schools, while Methodists, Disciples, and others issued standards of their own. Confusion grew; it became an acute issue who should make the standard for a Sunday

⁴ *Sunday School Journal* (American Sunday School Union), Oct. 10, 1832, p. 163.

⁵ This standard, the earliest on record for the Sunday School, called for it to be (1) evergreen, (2) graded, with departmentalization and annual promotions, (3) with records sufficient to answer statistical inquiries, (4) teachers' meetings, weekly, for lesson study, (5) training class, using a standard course, (6) home department, (7) cradle roll, (8) annual report to association, (9) delegates to conventions, (10) offering for association work.

⁶ I recall that about 1908 Mr. Fox in Kentucky, Joseph Clark in Ohio, I in New Jersey, and others, had our own ten-point standards and were beginning to give credit for points attained. The earliest of these I can now find is that of W. J. Semelroth for Wisconsin, 1910.

School, as each contained at least one point of promotional value. The outcome, in 1913, was the joint standard referred to in Chapter IV.

This joint ten-point Sunday School standard was widely used in the states and provinces and was adopted, sometimes with modifications, by most of the denominations. Occasionally it was modified by Council action, as when the International workers secured inclusion of a point on "association requirements," such as report, convention delegates, and contribution, to balance that on denominational offering. About 1918 its total was changed from ten to one hundred; several points were divided; and wall charts for Sunday School self-measurement were Internationally issued. Already however the Methodists and Congregationalists had led in a move to raise the educational quality of school standards, by dropping points of mere promotional advantage and stressing teaching aims. Besides joining in this effort as to the main standard, the Council developed elaborate standards for the graded departments. To supplant the handy and popular hundred-point standard, widely embodied as it was in statistical and field plans, proved to be a long campaign.

In the Council, from 1912, the leader in the formulation of standards had been the Methodist Sunday School editor, Dr. Wade Crawford Barclay. In the Committee on Education, as reconstituted in 1922, he continued this leadership as chairman of the section on organization and administration. In September, 1923, this section's committee on standards submitted a vigorous and original report, prepared at the committee's request by Professor H. J. Sheridan of Ohio Wesleyan University. It criticized the old standard and outlined a new standard covering the learning process, school organization, leadership, plant and equipment, intensity and comprehensiveness of work, support, and wider relationships. This study, fully discussed and worked over by the sec-

tion, became the foundation for a thousand-point standard, with score-card ratings left blank, which Dr. Barclay and his colleagues submitted to the Committee on Education in December, 1923. Rigorously criticized and amended, this was referred back to Dr. Barclay for recasting, rating by consultation with many workers, and trying out in selected fields. By the fall of 1924 revision and rating had been accomplished and experimental use was going on.

In 1925 the new International department of research took over this work. Under Dr. Vieth's supervision this general standard "for the Sunday church school" was further recast, with the addition of a sevenfold aim for religious education, based on Vieth's extensive studies in that field and published in his book, *Objectives in Religious Education*. Approved by the International Council of Religious Education in 1929, the standard finally appeared as two manuals, Standard A of 1,000 points for schools with adequate leadership and resources, and Standard B of 500 points for the average school. The points were grouped as to curriculum, leadership, administration, and housing and equipment; and for each standard a scoring manual was provided. These pamphlets, especially Standard B, have proved of great value in field promotion and training for administrative service. Similar pamphlets have been issued, giving standards for each department and for vacation and weekday work.

CURRICULUM

To build a curriculum for the church schools of North America, whose basic materials shall come not from books but from the lives of the pupils, is a task far transcending that of the first Lesson Committee of 1872 or of the Graded Lessons Conference of 1906. The latter group believed themselves to be primarily concerned not with information teaching but with child needs; but

they still thought of subject-matter as their lessons' material. Had their courses been less material-centered than they were, they would have had small chance of acceptance by the field for which they were prepared. As it was, the International graded lessons as issued were so bitterly attacked and so frequently modified to suit conservative objectors, that the Lesson Committee, in December, 1920, resigned them finally to the denominational publishers. They did so the more willingly because they had already caught the gleam of a new and far more comprehensive curricular endeavor.

In April, 1920, the Committee named a commission of seven, with Dr. Luther A. Weigle as chairman, to study the lesson situation and recommend a policy. Its report, the following December, emphasized the need for making the child the center of lessons for the church school. Another committee proposed a unified policy in lesson making for Sunday, weekday, and vacation church schools. As an outcome, the Committee in April, 1922, resolved that besides its "improved uniform lessons," and its three-year cycles of "group-graded lessons" for primary and for junior use, it would undertake construction of an "International curriculum of religious education," to cover Sunday and weekday needs in all grades. For this a commission of eight was named, led by Professor William Clayton Bower of the College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, later of the University of Chicago. Additional members, until 1925, were furnished by Section III of the Committee on Education.

Meeting in October, this commission planned (1) to secure as an advisory committee five high authorities in educational theory; (2) to employ an expert in curriculum, with office and staff, working under the commission's supervision; (3) to ask for ten thousand dollars a year for four years as a minimum budget; (4) to seek unification with all curriculum-making agencies, both instructional and expressional; (5) to gather for study

and evaluation all courses and parts of courses hitherto produced; (6) to find experimentation centers, educationally controlled, under sample conditions in city, town, and country; (7) to study the tendencies of modern education; and (8) to formulate a theory of the curriculum.

No ten thousand dollars, however, could be had from the new and debt-burdened International Council. The Institute of Social and Religious Research, to which appeal was made, decided to establish instead its own "character education inquiry" at Teachers College, New York.⁷ Undaunted, the commission proceeded to do its best on borrowed time. The expert advisers were secured and used. Professor Bower set up at Lexington his laboratory, where, for the next two or three years, his graduate students and Miss Hazel Lewis, from the Disciples' staff, at St. Louis, did notable work. In April, 1924, realizing its fifth objective, the commission published a huge "tabulation of church school curricula for Sunday, weekday, and vacation schools."⁸ This exhaustive survey of the current Sunday School market revealed that material-centered lessons, chiefly biblical, were still, even among graded courses, greatly in the majority; that the aim to impart information predominated over the aim to aid the pupil in controlling his experience; that telling rather than activity was the customary lesson method; and that the determination of what pupils' life situations needed guidance must be carried far beyond the mere enumeration of such situations as the analyzed lessons had undertaken to face.

At this time, also, the commission received from the

⁷ See its three-volume report by Hartshorne and May, *Studies in the Nature of Character*, 1928 to 1930.

⁸ In this folio work 269 yearly courses in 21 series were analyzed lesson by lesson, to show "content," form and source of the material; "use," aim, method, and form of presentation; and "life situations" or fields in which the lessons were supposed by their makers to find their outcome or application.

chairman and revised a brief "theory of the curriculum" or statement of principles and aims for the commission's further efforts. This was frequently revised and became a basic document of the enterprise and was soon expanded by Professor Bower into his illuminating book, *The Curriculum of Religious Education*. The main thesis of the "theory" is: "Religious education should center in the experience of the child. The teaching process . . . should seek to direct and enrich that experience in its religious aspects with a view to the adequate control of conduct and the development of Christian personality."⁹

These studies made clear that without full-time expert service little more could be done. The demand for an International bureau of research, to be concerned primarily with curriculum problems, was therefore now pressed on the Council by the Committee on Education; and on June 17, 1925, the director of research, Paul H. Vieth, entered on his work and took over from Dr. Bower the active leadership of the enterprise.

The first field studied concerned the aims of religious education. What was this curriculum to accomplish? As thesis work for his degree, Mr. Vieth explored the literature of religious education, evolving his book previously mentioned, a brief document outlining the book's contents, and the sevenfold aim prefixed to the pamphlet standards. Then came the problem as to what constitutes Christian character. In line with the philosophy and method of Professor W. W. Charters, in his book, *The Teaching of Ideals*, a list of twenty-two "Christian character traits" was made, with a positive and negative elaboration for each. A third document was a charting of the "areas of human experience" within

⁹ The concept of conduct under established controls was supplied by Professor A. D. Yocum, who, with me, was one of the additional committeemen from Section III of the Committee on Education.

which life situations as lesson material were to be found; each subdivided into personal, home, school, church, community, and beyond-the-community relations. The eleven areas agreed on by the bureau and its advisers were (1) health, (2) educational, (3) economic, (4) vocational, and (5) citizenship activities, (6) recreation, (7) sex, parenthood, and family life, (8) general life in the group, and (9) friendship, (10) æsthetic, and (11) specialized religious activities. The bureau had the courage to combine its second and third documents into a "cross-hatch," whose hundreds of squares indicated in theory the spread of the need for lessons, to secure in every area the development of every trait virtue and the elimination of every vice.

The most extensive and objective of the bureau's curricular researches was the gathering, studying, tabulating, and applying of the typical experiences of children and youth in the various areas of life. Besides utilizing the resources of literature and education, friends were enlisted in the search; and in 1929 a pamphlet guide to observation was issued, with samples of the kinds of reports desired and a form for recording them. Several hundred specific cases of life situations faced by children and youth were thus secured.

Some impatience was shown by the denominational editors and publishers over the commission's delays. Pressed by calls from the field, they wanted actual courses released for use. The commission showed them the value of these preliminary studies and made clear that under the new aims no one lesson course was possible. Realizing this, the editors, in the spring of 1927, sent twenty-seven of their staff experts, with others from the Missionary Education Movement and the Council staff, to spend three weeks at the Council office in a "curriculum construction conference," studying together the results of the research so far, and with this aid drafting, so far as time permitted, definite courses of

study. Several courses thus started were later completed for experimentation and utilized in published form.¹⁰

One obvious outcome of the life-centered philosophy of education thus followed was to draw the Council's lesson-making agencies together. In 1872 "lessons" meant portions of the Bible selected for teaching, with which worship, service, play, and other forms of expressional life had nothing to do. Sunday School lessons, therefore, and programs for the young people's society and other parish agencies were entirely apart; nor was even normal instruction, though quite book-centered, seen as part of the curriculum. Even in 1912 the old Council could develop its committees on courses of study and on teacher training without conscious overlap or conflict with the Lesson Committee; while the International committee on education felt equally free, and young people's leaders developed a program of training in the fourfold life that merited a large place in the curricular family. But with the consummation of the merger a new leadership, trained in the philosophy and method of a new education, came into power; and the days of separate compartments were numbered. One effective unification succeeded another; and in 1928 the historic old Lesson Committee, with its own full consent, was merged with the Committee on Education in the Council's Commission on Education. In December, 1928, it began its newly integrated work as the common pathfinder for the North American church-school cause.

An early product of its leadership was the so-called "International Curriculum Guide." Working together, the research staff and the Commission announced, in 1929, a series of pamphlets in which the practical data already developed were to be presented, in revised and expanded form, as guides to the makers of lessons for

¹⁰ *The Development of a Curriculum of Religious Education*, International Bulletin, 1928, 1930.

children, youth, adults, leaders, and executives of church schools and schools of training. Of the seven treatises thus projected, the first appeared in the spring of 1932.

YOUNG PEOPLE

In young people's work, notwithstanding the divisions and setbacks of 1924, the Council's leadership has been of signal value. In 1925 Superintendent Hayward called the Council's attention to the need for a unified program of worship, study, organization, and activities for youth, and announced a series of bulletins for camp and field use. The young people's professional advisory section, with the Committee on Education and the Council staff, began at once, through a committee, the creation of this unified program. The general title chosen, after wide consulting of youth itself, was "The Christian Quest," with the sub-title, "Youth and Jesus' Way of Life." In 1927 the pamphlets began to appear. By 1928 an extended set was in use, the Methodists and Presbyterians issuing adapted editions of their own. With more thorough training of adult leaders of youth, went the continuous organization and training of the young leaders themselves in conferences and councils, local, county, city, state, and International. At the First Quadrennial Convention of the International Council of Religious Education, Birmingham, Alabama, April 12 to 19, 1926, an International young people's conference was held and a council organized. By 1928 twelve hundred young people's county councils were reported as active. At the second Council convention, Toronto, 1930, both the general conference and the elected council of young people again met, with greatly increased power and sense of responsibility for making youth's contribution to church and community life.

As this story of the Sunday School movement thus reaches, with 1932, the limit of its included years, the

movement's leaders anticipate for their constituency "greater things than these." New unifications, already foreshadowed, will make possible broader community programs, more efficient churches, and higher school, class, and home achievements.¹¹ The evils and problems of the day sound for the church school its call, set its tasks, and make for the further consolidation of its forces. The daring concept of an education that aims to change life as well as impart knowledge, is steadily passing over from philosophers and idealists to teachers, classes, and schools. Already the centrality of the personality and leadership of Jesus, the living Christ, is the slogan of the church's youth, as it was of the World's Eleventh Sunday School Convention at Rio de Janeiro, July 25 to 31, 1932. With that as a bond, all types and persuasions of vital Christianity can, if they will, come and keep together. It is only the unity of Christian love that can open the educational way and make advance unwavering.

¹¹ H. Hartshorne and J. Q. Miller, *Community Organization in Religious Education*, ch. 17.

PART II
THE RISE OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL

VI

THE BEGINNINGS OF SUNDAY SCHOOL
METHOD

1780-1872

DRAMATIC and challenging as is the story of the Sunday School movement in North America, the correlative story of the development of Sunday School method is not less so. At many points each borrows interest from the situation on the other side. The struggle of inventors and innovators to break the crust of tradition and vindicate the worth of their contributions to the cause lifts this story of method from the commonplaces of fact-study and makes it of inspirational value.

The story properly begins at Gloucester, England, in or about July, 1780, with the trial of the Sunday School in its early form by its inventor, Robert Raikes. Three years later he named it, reported its success as a method, and recommended it to the world. The picturesque details of his first efforts are familiar. From this beginning there has followed a constant evolution of method, leading to changes in scope, administration, and curriculum, and developing problems and agencies of supply.

But is it true that Robert Raikes invented the Sunday School? The statement has been sharply challenged. What of those so-called Sunday Schools before Raikes? ¹ What of the Rev. Thomas Stock, or Miss Hannah Ball

¹ See list in H. C. Trumbull, *Yale Lectures on the Sunday School*, p. 112.

of High Wycombe and her "Sunday School" of 1769? What of Sophia Cooke (Mrs. Bradburn), claimed as first suggester to Raikes of the Sunday School idea? I have forgotten none of these; nor from one would I withhold an iota of praise. It would be simpler to drop these issues and follow Cope in honoring Raikes as "the father of the Sunday School, not as its inventor, still less as its maker or perfecter, but as its prophet."² Its prophet indeed he was, but he was neither maker nor perfecter of the institution. And yet he did invent what in his lifetime was known as the Sunday School.

What then did Raikes invent? No more than Edison, or the Wright brothers, or any other inventor, did he do it all. In the summer of 1780, when his experiments probably began, "the state of the art," as patent men say, had long included diocesan systems of religious schools, such as those of Cardinal Borromeo at Milan, pastoral catechizing like that of the Rev. Joseph Alleine, sometimes taking forms very like a Sunday School, and the philanthropic teaching of religion to village children, sometimes on Sunday. At Little Lever, Lancashire, Mr. Adam Crompton had for five years been maintaining at his expense a school on Sunday for the child-workers of his paper mill; which forms the nearest prior approximation to the Raikes invention of which the record has come down. Raikes invented none of these things but used them. His invention consisted of a combination of these and one or two other features, for the purposeful production of a widely useful and clearly visioned result; and he carried his inventive experiment to the point where its success was shown.

The general claim for the original Sunday School invention may be thus stated: A plan for ameliorating the degradation of a maladjusted industrial order, through the elementary moral and religious instruction of factory-working children, in schools held on Sunday,

² H. F. Cope, *Evolution of the Sunday School*, p. 50.

promoted by lay initiative, supported by lay philanthropy, taught by lay service, usually paid, and utilizing, as needed and available, the assistance of the clergy and the shelter and public services of the church. This limited but basic invention marks the starting-point of the Sunday School's career.

About the year 1785, within two years of Raikes's announcement of success with this invention, a second start was made, equally basic in nature, though more of a happy discovery than an invention. Voluntary Sunday School teaching began. At Oldham, England, it is said the first Sunday School teacher was found who refused the weekly stipend and taught without pay; and in the adjoining parish of Bolton the practice soon became common.³ The Wesleyan movement, strong in these parishes, motivated this step and at the same time raised and universalized the educational objective. The Raikes invention met an industrial need that was neither permanent nor universal; it met that need with a curriculum limited in scope and on a low religious key; it assumed a class-organized society; and on the privileged classes of this society it entailed a heavy burden of support. Its field, consequently, was limited, and its life was short. But when to its philanthropic aims were added those of the evangelical revival, and when each new free-taught Sunday School could finance itself without having to seek aid or patronage from "the upper classes," limitations were thrown off and the movement started on its world-wide and still expanding career.

The fourth decade of the Sunday School's history, 1811-20, saw its age-range extended both above and below. This central age-range has always been what Raikes specified in his letter to Colonel Townley, November 25, 1783—from six to twelve or fourteen. Below these ages the child is a responsibility of the home and does not constitute a visible social problem; beyond

³ Trumbull, p. 119, quoting Sir Charles Reed.

them he is an adolescent, presenting personality problems with which Sunday School workers have only in the last quarter century learned to deal. In Raikes's day the limit was more simply fixed. Of free public education there was none till years after he began; and religion, being exhibited, as was then assumed, only through Bible, prayer book, and services based thereon, could be properly attained and enjoyed only by those who had learned to read. Reading lessons, then, after the first efforts at cleanliness and good manners, formed the bulk of the first curricula; before six one does not learn reading, while at fourteen he has presumably reached the goal.

In 1789 the inclusion of adults began. In that year Sunday Schools were started in Wales under the lead of the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala. In these schools it soon became the custom for adult illiterates to attend, that they might like their children learn to read the Bible. To this day a large proportionate attendance of adults characterizes the Welsh Sunday Schools. In 1811 Mr. Charles opened separate schools or classes for non-reading adults. Independently, the following year, adult schools for Bible reading were started at Bristol, England; William Smith, a Methodist Sunday School worker, taking the lead, and a well-to-do merchant, Stephen Prust, supplying the money. A society for promoting adult schools was formed in Bristol in 1813, and another the following year in London. So enthusiastic was Mr. Prust over the good accomplished by these adult schools that he sent a full description of them to his American friend Mr. Divie Bethune of New York, with results that we followed in Chapter I.⁴

⁴ W. H. Watson, *The First Fifty Years of the Sunday School*, pp. 60, 82; Joseph ["J. B."] Belcher, *Robert Raikes, His Sunday Schools and His Friends*, p. 128. The report sent by Mr. Prust was a book, *History of Adult Schools*, by a Quaker physician of Bristol, Dr. Thomas Pole.

Robert Owen, an earnest social reformer, first attempted in England to extend education to children of what we now call the nursery and kindergarten ages. His first infant school was established about 1816. Three years later a society to run such a school was started in Westminster, and in July, 1820, another in Spitalfields, London; both for the children of the very poor. As master and mistress of the last-named school a London tradesman, Samuel Wilderspin, and his wife were engaged; and, in serene ignorance of what Pestalozzi and other Continental educators had learned, they proceeded with their task. Here is Wilderspin's story of his first infant-school session:

As soon as the mothers had left the premises I attempted to engage the affections of their offspring. I shall never forget the effort. A few who had previously been at a dame school sat quietly; but the rest, missing their parents, crowded about the door. One fellow, finding he could not open it, set up a cry of "Mammy, mammy!" and in raising this delightful sound all the rest simultaneously joined. My wife, who, though reluctant at first, had determined, on my accepting the situation, to give me the utmost aid, tried with myself to calm the tumult; but our efforts were utterly in vain. The paroxysm of sorrow increased instead of subsiding, and so intolerable did it become that she could endure it no longer and left the room; and at length, exhausted by effort, anxiety, and noise, I was compelled to follow her example, leaving my unfortunate pupils in one dense mass, crying, yelling, and kicking against the door. . . .

Ruminating, . . . I was struck by the sight of a cap of my wife's, adorned with colored ribbons, lying on the table; and observing from the window a clothes prop, it occurred to me that I put the cap on it, return to the school, and try the effect. The confusion when I entered was tremendous; but on raising the pole surmounted by the cap all the children were instantly silent, and looked up in mute astonishment; and when any hapless wight

seemed disposed to renew the noise, a few shakes of the prop restored tranquillity, and perhaps produced a laugh.

The same thing, however, will not do long; the charms of this *wonderful* instrument therefore soon vanished, and there would have been a sad relapse but for the marchings, gambols, and antics I found it necessary to adopt, and which, at last, brought the hour of twelve, to my greater joy than can easily be conceived. Revolving these circumstances, I felt that that memorable morning had not passed in vain. I had in fact found the clew. It was now evident that the senses of the children must be engaged; that the great secret of training them was to descend to their level and become a child;—and that the error had been to expect in infancy what is only the product of later years.⁵

Following this adventurous start, with its highly modern conclusion, Wilderspin developed an elaborate technique of infant-school procedure, including physical exercises and learning the multiplication table and other items by means of play. In 1823 the Sunday School Union discussed the value and application of the new infant schools. All approved the work; but many, including Mr. Wilderspin, doubted its applicability to the Sunday School. It was nevertheless widely so applied. In 1827 the movement was transplanted to New York and Philadelphia, and in 1829 to Boston. Like the adult schools, the infant Sunday Schools were for years thought of as separate from the Sunday School proper; but with the advance of public education learning to read became less and less a Sunday School task, and so the basis of the separation tended to disappear.

On May 23, 1827, Mrs. Divie Bethune formed in New York City an infant-school society which established nine or more "infant Sabbath schools." The first of

⁵ *Sunday School Journal* (American Sunday School Union), Oct. 3, 1832, p. 157, citing Wilderspin's "Early Discipline Illustrated."

these, her own, was opened on July 16; and for it she prepared a hymn book, and a manual, *The Ten Commandments*, etc., published in 1830. The manual is in the American Sunday School Union Library.⁶ At St. Andrew's Church, Philadelphia, the Berean Society of the parish, September 20, 1827, formed an infant school, at first for the boys who could not read. The rector, Dr. Bedell, reports this as the first infant school in America, or, so far as he knows, in the world.⁷ In Boston, December, 1829, following a year or two of weekday infant-school or day nursery work by Miss M. V. Ball and others, Henry J. Howland opened an infant class as an adjunct to the Sunday School of the First Baptist Church.⁸

The Rev. John Todd, in his admirable book, *The Sabbath School Teacher*, devotes the eighth of his fourteen lectures to "Infant Sabbath Schools"; from which it appears that such schools were still counted as separate institutions, and that they were far from common. Forty-five years ago, in a little New Jersey Sunday School, I found a class of "infants" being taught to read. Ten years later, in Trenton, New Jersey, the old pastor where I worshipped used to pray for "our Sunday Schools and Bible classes," though the parish had never had more than one Sunday School.

From its start the Sunday School has had a lesson problem. Out of its leaders' efforts to solve this came the steps of progress which we are now to trace, to the establishment of lesson uniformity in 1872.

Raikes's first teachers used what printed materials they could find—prayer book and psalters from the

⁶ G. W. Bethune, *Memoirs of Mrs. Joanna Bethune*, pp. 122, 163.

⁷ S. H. Tyng, *Life of Gregory T. Bedell*, p. 171.

⁸ Cathcart's *Baptist Cyclopaedia*, art. "Infant Sunday Schools." Like the other two authorities, Dr. Cathcart counts this the beginning of the work in America.

church, small instruction books on the collects, the fast days, and other church observances, and primitive A B C books which were known among the children as "Redinmadesy." That is of course "Reading made easy."⁹ In 1785 Raikes issued from his own press *The Sunday Scholar's Companion*, a simple Scripture reading book, which had a wide use. Bibles as a Sunday School supply were then out of reach on account of their cost. It was the demand for low-priced Bibles created by the Sunday Schools of Wales that led to the start of the first Bible society in 1804. As late as 1825, in England, a Bible cost at lowest three and ninepence, a Testament one and threepence.¹⁰

Sunday School workers, apparently, at some time prior to 1811, invented, developed, and put on sale Scripture reward tickets of several colors indicating exchange value; the initial "blue ticket," small change of the system, representing the credit for the memorizing of one verse or lesson. When, at the date mentioned, this "modern method" reached Philadelphia, through the work of the Rev. Robert May, it was warmly received and stimulated the organizing and recruiting of evangelical Sunday Schools. For many years, down to our own times, this method stimulated the vogue of competitive Bible memorizing.¹¹

The fact is, these earnest workers were groping for a curricular principle that would fit the conditions of the institution they were promoting and the educational philosophy of the time. Bible memorizing for the younger and middle pupils, continuous Bible reading for

⁹ Testimony of a surviving Raikes pupil, in J. H. Harris, *Robert Raikes, the Man and His Work* (1899), p. 32. This and other like testimonies were taken down by the author's father in 1863.

¹⁰ W. H. Groser, *A Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, p. 34.

¹¹ E. W. Rice, *The Sunday School Movement and the American Sunday School Union*, p. 52.

senior and adult classes, catechisms of many sorts with answers verbally exact, and later, in 1831, the absurdly mechanical "verse-a-day method," unwisely imitated from the beautiful Moravian system which for a century had provided a daily text for family devotional use, all testified to the need for a new invention. And from Scotland, about 1810, the invention came—the most influential Sunday School invention by far from the rise of voluntary teaching to the present day. James Gall of Edinburgh invented the limited Bible question lesson.

Boldly attacking the memorizing methods then nearly universal, by which the day's lesson consisted of but a few verses, a passage short enough to be learned and recited, and the equally mistaken exercise of continuous Bible reading with no pause to inquire into the meaning and application of what was read, Mr. Gall proposed instead a "limited lesson," too long to invite memorizing, too short to require skimming, with a series of prepared questions to direct the attention of the pupil to all sides of each verse's meaning. His *Nature's Normal School* presented a series of such lessons. Gall used "normal" here in its ordinary sense—a school according to nature's law. The application of the word to teacher training had not yet been made. His later book, *The End and Essence of Sabbath-school Teaching*, presents his argument for the limiting of Bible lessons.

In other words, Gall invented the Sunday School method of selecting as a class lesson a homogeneous Bible passage, from ten to sixteen or twenty verses long, containing material of instructional value and avoiding as far as possible matter unsuited to general class discussion. This limited passage was to be used as the basis for a rapid series of questions to bring out, verse by verse, its meaning and application to life.

Here again the materials of the invention were anything but new. The chapter and verse division of the Bible prepares it for limited-lesson use. For many cen-

turies the liturgies of the church had used limited lessons in the Gospel and Epistle for each Sunday of the year. And if we are to accept the striking conclusions of the recent "form criticism" of the synoptic Gospels,¹² it was in just such limited-lesson form that the apostles and their fellow Christian teachers, and possibly Jesus Himself, cast, taught, and orally transmitted the parables, the miracle stories, the dialogues, and the brief units of teaching of the Rabbi of Nazareth, with the stories of Passion Week, which Mark and Matthew and other first-hand evangelists afterward gathered into the continuous texts we know. What this Edinburgh publisher did was to apply this ancient device to the needs and uses of a new art. He brought the limited lesson into the Sunday School; and there it is unto this day, as the persistently large and vital circulation figures of uniform-lesson periodicals abundantly attest. The early American makers of lesson lists and question books based thereon—Parmele, Harvey Fisk, Albert Judson, and John Hall—took up in 1823 and later the Gall system of questions and greatly improved it; but neither they nor their successors made any attempt to change the limited-lesson method of Bible presentation on which their various plans of question and comment were based.¹³

To the first of these American pioneers, Truman Parmele of Utica, New York, must be credited, as Professor Lankard shows, the innovation if not the invention of selected lessons; that is, limited lessons not chosen by the teacher for his class but selected in advance for all the school's classes and furnished in a list, with titles indicating contents. Simple as this may sound, it marked a definite and permanent advance in

¹² Conveniently summarized by Professor Burton S. Easton, *Christ in the Gospels*, ch. 2.

¹³ Fully and clearly described in F. W. Lankard, *A History of the American Sunday School Curriculum*, ch. 7.

Sunday School method. Another came when two Sunday Schools in New York City, in 1824, found it an advantage to unite in following the same list of titled limited-lesson selections. A third advance came when questions on each verse were added to these lists; at first, as in Parmele's lists, very simple, but later extended after Gall's plan and grouped in sets, with different type sizes to aid in grading the instruction. By these steps, rapidly taken, was opened the way for the long reign of the annual Scripture question book, which from 1827 to 1866 remained the standard lesson supply for the American Sunday School.

Less of an invention than a doctrine, was the view that all classes in the Sunday School should unite in the study of the same lesson. Only upon a limited Bible assignment could they thus unite; and the adoption by a Sunday School of a list of such lessons, each for its appointed Sunday, was a call to all its teachers to conform. For the question-book period, however, so far as I can find, no pressure of this sort was put upon the extremes of the school. As it was only by degrees that the "Bible" and "infant" classes came to be counted integral parts of the school, it is easy to see how the one lesson was thought of as in use by the whole school, when in fact both the infants and the adults followed whatever it seemed good to their respective leaders to handle. This was the customary status throughout the question-book era. Two further steps were needed—full inter-class uniformity within the school, and wide inter-school uniformity within each body of users of certain rival lesson periodicals—before the momentous step could be taken of merging these rivalries as to the weekly Bible lesson in one list of such lessons Internationally chosen. When, in 1872, at Indianapolis, B. F. Jacobs and his colleagues finally took this action, it was on the old limited lesson that they stood; for no other was then thought of. It is hard to see, indeed, how any

other type could have been found on which all denominations, all publishers, all Sunday Schools and all ages could be induced to unite.

Four other inventions contributed to make possible this act of 1872 and the forty years of rigorous lesson uniformity that followed. These were the normal class, the Sunday School institute, the periodical lesson help, and the Akron type of Sunday School building. All four were the product—in the third case with help from British sources, and in the fourth case indirectly—of the inventive pioneering of one man.

In the year 1855, at Irvington, New Jersey, a bold and ingenious young Methodist preacher named John H. Vincent conducted each week, for his parishioners and all who would come, a "Palestine class" for the study of the geography and background of the Bible story. Two years later, at Joliet, Illinois, while continuing this more general congregational teaching, he formed as an outgrowth of this effort a "normal class," so called, for the specific training of young people, who had not hitherto taught, in the methods of effective Bible teaching. The idea of training prospective teachers and the name "normal" came from the earlier secular work of Henry Barnard and Horace Mann. An earnest call for such work had been voiced ten years earlier by Dr. D. P. Kidder, secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union. It was Vincent, however, who in 1857 took the lead in the intelligent, organized, and purposeful training of teachers in and for the Sunday School.¹⁴

Success with these local efforts led Mr. Vincent to propose to his conference, in 1860, the holding of Sunday School teachers' institutes. On Wednesday, April 17, 1861, at Freeport, Illinois, such an institute was held for the Galena District of the Rock River Conference.

¹⁴ J. H. Vincent, *Sunday School Institutes and Normal Classes*, pp. 132, 171.

County Sunday School conventions had been held in Illinois since 1846, and still earlier under the American Sunday School Union, as was noted in Chapter I; but here began, for America, the method of training the Sunday School workers of a denominational or general field by institute teaching and discussion. Ardently did Vincent push his plan, seeking to put back of each institute a permanent organization to sustain its continued working. In 1864 Richard G. Pardee of New York State made an independent start in the same line; and for many years Sunday School institutes, usually undenominational, were a leading feature of the cause. The convention programs took on some of the institute features and so increased their educational power.¹⁵

Next must be considered an invention which for well-nigh seventy years has been associated in most Sunday Schools with weekly lesson study by teacher and class, and in denominational interests with all that is sustaining and prosperous in publication and profits. In logical sequence to his normal class and his institutes, John H. Vincent in 1866 invented the periodical help on the select limited Bible question lesson. From the forty-years' question-book era to the still flourishing lesson-help era it was Vincent who led the way. Mr. Vincent had attended the world's convention at London in 1862; and in his quarterly of 1865 he shows familiarity with British Sunday School literature and events. The London Sunday School Union began in 1841 to publish notes on its listed Scripture lessons; and as early as 1826 David Stow had taught the Sunday School workers "the importance of the interrogative, illustrative, and elliptical methods of teaching." How far, therefore, Vincent's lesson methods of 1866 were based on earlier British

¹⁵ Vincent, p. 63; R. G. Pardee, *The Sabbath School Index*, p. 32.

practice is not clear. They were new to the Americans.¹⁶

With close fidelity to type, probably under competitive pressure for cheapness, the Scripture question books issued by the American Sunday School Union and its jealous rivals had continued for a full generation to print weekly lesson titles, references, and questions only. Even a line of definition or explanation was rare; and of introduction or comment there was none. The little board-covered volume was a question book and nothing more. But it lasted for a whole year; and it cost but eight cents.

In 1862 Orange Judd, a Methodist laymen and agricultural publisher of New York City, published the first of four annual question books on an improved plan. In lesson selection and treatment he was helped by Dr. James Strong, author of the Bible Concordance, and a lady called "Mrs. Dr. Olin." The books were issued from the Methodist publishing house but were for general use. The innovations were slight—lesson text printed in full, statement of time and place for each lesson, a paragraph of "connecting history," and a table of Sunday dates for seven years to enable Sunday Schools to date their lesson appointments exactly. There were also a few general helps. In spite of these improvements, this was still merely a question book, and it belongs with those of the previous era.

By 1865, when the last of these Judd books had appeared, Vincent had organized in Chicago a continuing weekly Sunday School institute, published a quarterly containing, among other matters, four suggestive lesson lists, one of which was his own, and become superintendent of the reorganized Cook County Sunday School Union. In January, 1866, appeared from the press of Adams, Blackmer, and Lyon, Chicago, the first number of a monthly, *The Sunday School Teacher*, edited by

¹⁶ Groser, pp. 32, 41, 63.

Vincent and others as a committee of the county union; and it was in the pages of this number that Vincent's lesson-help invention appeared.

His series was called "Two Years with Jesus." There were twenty-four lessons a year, each two Sundays long. Every lesson was dated for its Sunday. Each Sunday's material included a series of questions, with the simpler questions in small capitals for use with younger pupils. In this there was nothing new except the lesson selections, which the writer, like his predecessors, made for himself, and the two-Sunday arrangement, which proved cumbersome and was abandoned the following year. But to these features current in the art, Vincent added seven permanently valuable improvements which were new in American usage: (1) monthly issues; (2) a separate pupil's lesson leaf; (3) a "golden text," so named by Vincent himself in his quarterly of the preceding year; (4) the pupil's weekly home Bible reading; (5) elliptical printing of the lesson verses as an aid in memorizing; (6) generalized headings for the teacher's explanatory notes—"parallel passages, persons, places; dates, doings, doctrines, duties"; and (7) a set of lesson illustrations for the teacher's use.

For four months Dr. Vincent edited the new magazine, supplying its lessons until the end of the year. The attention aroused by these novel helps, their rapidly mounting circulation, and the evident business value of the periodical property thus created, hastened the plans of his denominational house to call him to New York as agent of its Sunday School Union and editor for the Book Concern. Leaving the magazine in the hands of the county committee, Vincent was soon issuing for the methodists the *Berean Lessons*, which his versatility easily made independent of his first creation.

In the general Sunday School situation of this period, created by these three inventions and by the advances of the convention movement, it seemed to the editors and

platform leaders of the cause essential that all parts of the Sunday School on any Sunday should study the same Bible lesson. The infant class and the Bible classes, long allowed lesson freedom, should join the main-room classes in study of a lesson for which such greatly improved helps were now available. And only through common worship, study, and review on the basis of this lesson could the unity of the Sunday School and its teaching be assured. Why this doctrine and its rationalizing defenses should so appeal, not only to Jacobs, Eggleston, Pardee, Trumbull, Ralph Wells, and other speakers of the sixties, but to the average Sunday School superintendent then, since, and now, it is not hard to see. It is always pleasant to have one's jurisdiction enlarged.

But the application of this doctrine faced a difficulty. For forty years the need had been seen of giving to the infant class, and wherever possible to the classes of adults and seniors, rooms of their own. It had long been the practice to provide for the "infants" not only a separate room but also, in that room, a "gallery,"—a little grandstand or circle of raised seats, ascending in tiers from the teacher, and, owing to its egg-box inhibition of childlike restlessness, frequently descending in tears from the occupants thereof! The one lesson for all classes clearly called for platform recognition of the lesson in the exercises of the Sunday session; but how was this to be effected in a large Sunday School if these or any classes were to be granted, without loss of time and duplication of space, the privilege of a separate room? The dilemma came suddenly; and it was altogether new.

Lewis Miller, of Akron, Ohio, was then superintendent of the First Methodist Episcopal Sunday School of that city. He faced this problem, just as his church was ready to rebuild. He corresponded with many Sunday School leaders, including the now famous Dr. John H.

Vincent, and asked for suggestions. "Provide," wrote Vincent, "for togetherness and separateness. Have a room in which the whole school can be brought together in a moment for simultaneous exercises, and with the minimum of movement be divided into classes for uninterrupted class work." Working on this germ idea, with the help of his architects, Mr. Miller built and put to successful use, in 1867, the first Sunday School building on the "Akron plan."

Once more the Sunday School inventor was original only in his adaptation of old ideas to the needs of his art. Study the plan of the original Akron building, and of that built by John Wanamaker for Bethany in Philadelphia seven years later, with the many like structures still in use.¹⁷ What model did these early designers follow? It would have given those mid-Victorians a genuine shock, had they realized that in all essentials they were copying the architecture of that ungodly institution, the theater, and were adding to it, in their radial classrooms, those instruments of worldliness, the balcony boxes of the opera house! And then, having secured their parquet, galleries, boxes, and stage, many of these old-time superintendents proceeded to put on performances that were theatrical rather than educational, and that at best magnified sessional unity and platform effect at the expense of class opportunity and individual growth. It is easy however to criticize from the vantage of sixty years. Those who have known and watched and worked under the great superintendents of that now distant era, as I have done, can testify that there were solid educational values in those massed effects that went part way, at least, to offset their losses. We are idealists; but the old-fashioned uniform-lesson superintendent was also an idealist.

¹⁷ Nelson's *Cyclopedia of Sunday Schools*, art. "Sunday School Architecture."

Twelve inventions, therefore, directly incorporated in the method-structure of the Sunday School, in addition to the Sunday School institute and other inventions of the field, were needed, to bring the story of church-school evolution up to the point where uniform lessons became possible through the act of the convention of 1872. Think of them! (1) the lay-taught school held on Sunday; (2) the voluntary teacher motivated by evangelical zeal; (3) the reward ticket with Bible motto, for stimulation of pupil endeavor; (4) the adult school extension; (5) the infant school extension; (6) the limited Bible question lesson; (7) the selected lesson furnished by list; (8) the question book annual; (9) the Sunday School normal class; (10) the periodical Sunday School lesson help; (11) inter-class lesson uniformity; and (12) the separate-together type of Sunday School architecture. All this to bring the Sunday School to that stage of development where many seem to think that all progress this side of Robert Raikes began!

The steps of progress in method since 1872 have been fully as basic and influential as were those that went before. We are later to consider these. They have brought us to where we now face needs, problems, dilemmas, as urgent and as baffling as any of those that our brave predecessors have met and overcome.

In the field of church-centered Christian education our Lord still has need for the inventor and the pioneer. The later honors that young Vincent so amply earned, and, far higher than these, the "Well done!" of the Master, are waiting other ventures. Whether as ministers or as laymen, let us give of our best to the extension and upbuilding of the church school; and as we toil and plan and experiment and adventure with untried means and untested resources, may we not forget the faithful Sunday School inventors and pathfinders of the long ago.

VII

PROGRESS UNDER THE UNIFORM LESSONS

FOR the forty years that followed the beginning in 1872 of the International Uniform lesson system, nine-tenths of the Sunday Schools of North America submitted, most of them with sincere and ardent loyalty, to the obligation thus imposed. "Next Sunday's lesson" determined every teacher's plan, and in most cases also the worship services and platform talks of main room and primary department, Bible study in the mid-week prayer meeting and the Saturday teachers' meeting, the daily home readings used in private and family devotions, and the exercises of the quarterly review. For all these conforming schools, the one conspicuous, universal, and taken-for-granted Sunday School institution was "the lesson for the day." The non-conformists included most of those in Episcopal, Lutheran, and non-evangelical bodies, a few other dissidents, and, after 1891, Blakeslee lesson users and the experimenters to be described in Chapter VIII. In Canada, the uniform selections were quite largely followed by the Church of England schools.

This wide and zealous conformity was partly automatic, the unreasoned following of the supply houses' lead, mentioned in Chapter II, and partly the natural result of the cheapness and excellence of the many printed and pictured supplies. Over and above these influences, the spontaneous loyalty of the schools to the system, vigorous in many cases today after twenty more years of changing condition, sprang from the satisfactions its adult users received. Pastors, superintendents,

teachers, parents, adult and home Bible students, and convention speakers joined with the writers and publishers in praise and gratitude for the spiritual and exegetical blessings of the system that made all Sunday School teaching one.

In an age of church-school administration that has learned to place child need rather than adult convenience in the midst, that has received, assimilated, and forgotten the temporary but vast benefits of this uniformity, and that has carried the materials and technique of graded leadership to the brilliant levels exemplified in many fields today, the title of this chapter may provoke surprise. Can any good thing come out of this Nazareth? Under so deadening a yoke, could the Sunday School world make any progress at all? Let us look into this matter.

No student of Sunday School history can understand the old lessons our fathers and our grandfathers knew and loved, who views them only as a grotesque contrast to what he sees as a rational curriculum of church-school Bible study. Nor must he dwell on the crudities and follies that too often marked the use of those lessons in class and on platform. If he would enter the rich spiritual fellowship of those millions of teachers and students, expounders and hearers, he must see the vision of the lesson makers and of their users, as each strove to do with his lesson such work as the master-users of the day set before him. Let me draw from my own recollection a few cases of such master-use.

In the early eighties, as a young collegian, I attended the large mixed Bible class taught in a Philadelphia Sunday School by Dr. H. Clay Trumbull. There was no organization beyond a secretary; and the "activities" consisted in following the Doctor's keen queries as to the "root meaning" of some familiar Bible word, the uncomfortable implications of some simple precept, or the challenge to what a member had "always supposed" a

certain text to mean; with the rapid fire of discussion that usually followed. There was no lecturing, no exhorting, and little agreement. Whatever the day's passage and title might be, that hour woke us up for the week and sent us out to take our lives more seriously. It also broadened and freshened our Bible concepts in a notable degree.

Once or twice during that period, and again a little later, I visited Bethany Sunday School, Philadelphia, viewed its amazing temple of lesson uniformity, and followed Mr. Coyle the associate, John R. Sweney the chorister, and John Wanamaker the superintendent, as each in turn conducted the opening worship, led the great assembly in song, and reviewed from the desk the day's lesson. It was usual for Mr. Wanamaker to lead the large mixed Bible Union in the adjoining church for the first hour, and come to the school platform for the closing exercises. The opening service began at half-past two, as was once impressed on me when a young lady and I, arriving one minute late, had to wait twenty-nine minutes in the vestibule. This service, fresh each quarter, and based on the lessons, was elaborate. It was shared by the primary and junior rooms on either side, the women's Bible class at rear of the broad platform, the three tiers of classrooms beyond the fountain-cooled main room floor, and the corner-class members and the visitors in the side galleries, as they followed the service in winter from a broad card and in summer from a fan. Once, as substitute, I taught a class, learning that every teacher had an understudy supposed to be ready to take his or her place, the need for a stranger being quite exceptional. At another time I visited on the lower floor my *Bothnia* fellow-traveler, Miss Annie S. Harlow, and watched her inspire her large roomful of juniors (additional to those above) with a crisp bit of spiritual vitality drawn from the same lesson that was being expounded upstairs. When Mr. Wanamaker arose to

talk familiarly with the great assembly about the more universal applications of the lesson, the hush marked an interest that was genuine; and some of his words I can recall to this day. The impressiveness came not alone from his personality and the respect felt for him; I have seen the same power at work through a much less gifted superintendent, after I, as teacher, had done my best and failed. There was a "shared experience" in all this that secreted a genuine educational power, apart from the content or interpretation of the lesson used.

With the little children the system's weakness most seriously appeared. That a qualified teacher could take any Bible selection and from it make a good primary lesson was the usual and the insufficient defense. The statement however was true, and was constantly finding illustration. As an extreme case, I vividly recall how Miss Harlow once demonstrated the primary possibilities of the lesson, "Israel Often Reproved," Amos 4: 4-13, with its grim golden text, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." With a slanting board, a small round box, and a few blocks, she showed how "Bertie" ran against the consequences of disobedience and sin and was once and again checked in his evil way; till at last, slain in a drunken fight, his chances for repentance were over, and the box dropped to the floor. Without fright or horror, but only sadness and realization of the reach and the limits of God's love, the lesson story aimed to fix in each little heart a new meaning for nature's warnings and other checks, and against temptations a new and stronger conduct-control.

With this glance at the conditions and ideals of the Sunday School a half-century ago, let us note some of the steps of invention and promotion by which it has advanced toward those of today. First come four steps of expansion, enlarging the school of the church to include the young people, the babies, the adult stay-at-

homes, and the under-privileged children previously to a large extent unreached.

In the year 1881, as for years before and after, it was usual in most Sunday Schools for many of the older girls and most of the older boys to get "too big to come to Sunday School." Some boys gladly stayed or returned to meet the challenge of a task as secretary or librarian. Some groups were held by an unusual teacher. Here and there a parish gave its adolescents some attention; but for the majority the church service was the only religious school.

What wonder, then, that when Francis E. Clark proposed his simple plan for a young people's "society of Christian endeavor," the idea, like that of Raikes, was no sooner tested out in the Williston Church at Portland, Maine, than it leaped all bounds, swelled to a mighty movement, and was promptly institutionalized under the United Society of Christian Endeavor? The young people, their nature and needs by pastors and Sunday School leaders alike ignored, proved to be hungry, not alone for self-managed organization, fellowship, and fun, but for religion, real worship, and self-giving service. All that Christian Endeavor in the eighties empirically hit upon, the Sunday School leaders have since in their programs substantially supplied; but their trial-and-error progress has been tragically slow.

When these young people, eager for service "for Christ and the church," looked over the Sunday School, and after filling vacancies sought more to do, they naturally called together the main-room juniors and intermediates and proceeded to administer to these willing but immature children adapted forms of that worship and organization that had done so much for them. Their leaders, working largely on Endeavor experience, went on for years preparing helps and promoting methods that took no account of contemporary advances in Sunday School method for the grades and ages concerned. For twenty-

five formative years, 1889 to 1914, I can testify that state, provincial, and International leaders never saw the face of an Endeavor conferee, until Amos R. Wells took his seat on the reorganized Lesson Committee. Whose fault this was I cannot tell; but the loss was great to both sides.

Then came the babies. It was natural that these should be reached through the primary class; yet their original inclusion came as a missionary rather than as a Sunday School enterprise. In the Central Baptist Church of Elizabeth, New Jersey, the primary teacher, Mrs. Alonzo Pettit, was also an earnest worker for foreign missions. In 1877 she began to include in her class birthday record an "infant department," which, as the "baby band" of the church, became an auxiliary of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society and made offerings thereto. Similarly, in 1879, Mrs. Richard B. Doughty, primary teacher in the Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Sunday School of Camden, New Jersey, listed her pre-primary children and enrolled them with her denominational home missionary society. In 1883, at Elizabeth, Miss Juliet E. Dimock joined her sister Mrs. Pettit, took over the "little black book," and systematized the calling and other features of what was, the following year, called the "cradle roll"; while at Camden, in 1884, Mrs. Doughty first posted a wall roll of her "mother's jewels," and in 1893 began making and issuing to them home-made certificates of membership. Through this period, and for years later, the women's missionary organizations of the denominations counted the cradle roll a feature of their plans for local missionary education.¹

In 1896 Mr. W. C. Hall, superintendent of the Taber-

¹ Mrs. M. F. Bryner, art. "Cradle Roll, The," in *Nelson's Cyclopaedia*; arts. by Mrs. Juliet Dimock Dudley in *New Jersey Sunday School Messenger*, March, 1901, and Mrs. Alonzo Pettit in *Convention Report*, Denver 1902, p. 199.

nacle Presbyterian Sunday School of Indianapolis, becoming interested in the cradle roll as a Sunday School auxiliary, printed for his primary department a certificate of cradle-roll membership and became an ardent champion of the method. A primary teacher at Springfield, Massachusetts, was also reported that year as successfully adapting this missionary device to Sunday School use. When Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts, president of the International Primary Union, in 1897, attacked this innovation as undermining the religious responsibility of the home, Mr. Hall vigorously replied. The idea spread through advocacy by state and provincial primary leaders; and by 1900 wall rolls and other supplies were in the Sunday School market, and the cradle roll had become a standard feature of progressive Sunday Schools.²

The home department is still widely used and with some recent proposed expansions is facing its true scope and function as a church department of work for the homes. For many years its ardent advocate and promoter was Dr. W. A. Duncan, of Syracuse, New York, who also claimed it as his invention. The facts appear to be these:

(1) At the first Toronto International convention, June 24, 1881, Dr. John H. Vincent, in a conference, spoke of mission needs as to "children in farms and out-of-the-way places." Referring to a paper signed by the Rev. John Zimmerman of Syracuse, New York, he offered the suggestion of "home classes, little parlor classes meeting together where they cannot have a Sunday School. Let a good man or woman get together five or six or eight or ten little people and teach them the Word of God; and where we have one Sunday School now, let us have ten of these little classes." He referred inquirers to Mr. Zimmerman as the authority on this method. The idea evidently captivated the imagination of Dr.

² *The Sunday School Times*, Nov. 21, 1896; June 12, July 17, 1897.

Duncan, who then or later was chairman of the state executive committee; and both he and Dr. Vincent heartily advocated it, though with what success I have never learned.

(2) Three years later, at Royalston, Vermont, Dr. Samuel W. Dike, a minister resident in the Congregational church there, deeply interested in marriage and divorce, with other problems of the home, realized that for a century the church had been developing its church centered activities—Sunday School, missionary societies, temperance bands, and recently young people's societies—at the expense of the home's chance to teach and maintain family religion. To channel this religious power back into the homes he devised a plan to enroll home students of the weekly Sunday School lesson, pledge them to regular study, supply them monthly or quarterly, by visitation, with lesson papers, and take their records and offerings. After a few months' successful trial he drafted printed forms and announced his invention in *The Pilgrim Teacher* for April, 1885.

(3) Dr. Duncan, who like Dr. Dike was a Congregationalist, at once claimed that this was simply his own home class method of 1881. His version of the plan appeared in the magazine for June. Dr. Dike not yielding, Dr. Duncan later evolved the compromise title "home class department"; and for years he and other promoters greatly puzzled the local workers through this confusion of two methods essentially distinct.

(4) The class feature, always an interesting possibility, was seldom realized and soon dropped from view. The standard home department routine planned by Dike, and improved in 1893 with the Rev. Curtis E. Mogg's invention of the quarterly record envelope, has maintained itself to this day.

A vacation school is reported to have been held in Montreal in 1877, "with a program of hymns, songs, Scripture reading, stories, military drill, Bible memory

work, calisthenics, manual work, and patriotic exercises." In 1898 Mrs. W. A. Hawes, under the auspices of Epiphany Baptist Church, New York City, conducted such a school. The Baptist City Missionary Society became interested in the possibilities of the method. In 1901 the "Daily Vacation Bible School" movement began, under the lead of the Rev. Robert G. Boville, the society's secretary. He sensed the threefold needs of idle children in vacation time, idle city churches through the week in summer, and idle students capable of enlistment for community welfare, and determined to bring these three together. Five Baptist churches on New York's East Side were secured that summer; and in them the first schools of the movement were begun. The curriculum included manual work, organized play, and Bible study, chiefly through story telling.³

A distinct and much more restricted movement for vacation schools, led by the Rev. H. R. Vaughan, a Congregational minister at Elk Mound, Wisconsin, with the aid of Professor William J. Mutch of Ripon College, Wisconsin, grew out of demonstration classes of children assembled in 1898 for model teaching before a summer institute. Soon these classes, held for two or three weeks in vacation time, became an interest in themselves and were continued and perfected, constituting a vacation religious day school, with two-year grades extending from kindergarten to high school, a six-day week of three-hour sessions, and a curriculum, partly in story form, which included worship, brief but close drill, and much self-expression. The educational standards of the method have been high, and trained leadership has been insisted on.⁴ Since 1912 a third type, the "summer Bible

³ J. S. Armentrout, *Administering the Vacation Church School*, p. 8, citing, for the Montreal school, the Handbook of the International Association of Daily Vacation Bible Schools; *Nelson's Cyclopedia*, art. on "Daily Vacation Bible School Association," by R. G. Boville.

⁴ H. S. Stafford, *The Vacation Religious Day School*.

school," has been zealously promoted, with emphasis on Christian doctrine, Bible memorizing, and the exclusion of handwork.

Advance from the educational level of the early uniform-lesson era to that of today involved far more than the outgrowing of uniform lessons. That was the objective of the graded-lesson campaigners whose long struggle will be narrated in Chapter VIII. But we were still Herbartians, and thought of lessons as subject-matter, the printed materials as comprising the curriculum, and all else as subordinate and supplemental thereto. We had not yet come to see that education is primarily the fruitage of experience, guided and enriched by a leader; that such education must be social; that the content of an experience course will so blend with its method that the two become indistinguishable; that religion is not an additional subject of study but a quality of life; that much of the heretofore incidental must, on its character-forming value, be given central place; and that the whole ongoing life of the pupils, so far as reachable by the school, constitutes its curriculum. Recognition of these and like principles, but recently voiced and interpreted to the religious educator,⁵ had to be preceded by various trials, experiments, and inventive starts, to lend meaning to this philosophy and make comprehensible its terms. Two of these starts, the boy-club movement and pupil participation, must now be traced.

In October, 1883, in Glasgow, Scotland, a young reserve officer, William A. Smith, with two friends, organized thirty boys ranging from twelve to seventeen, into the first company of the Boys' Brigade. His purpose was to bring to the working-class boys of the loosely run Sunday Schools some of that character training which he had

⁵ As in W. C. Bower, *The Curriculum of Religious Education*; see also his later *Character Through Creative Experience*, and, for criticism and balance, W. S. Athearn, *The Minister and the Teacher*.

experienced through military discipline and drill. He did not magnify military features such as uniform and official rank but sought to keep these strictly subordinate to the culture of manliness, Christianity, and character.⁶ The movement spread on its observed power for good and in 1887 came to America, where it led the way in the multiplication of boys' organizations mentioned in Chapter III, of which the "Knights of King Arthur," sponsored by W. Byron Forbush, was the earliest and best known.⁷ When this earlier movement was followed after the Boer War by Baden-Powell's more adequately educational "Boy Scouts," a much wider constituency was assured.

About 1869 the Young Men's Christian Association began in America its definite work for boys. In 1890 Sumner F. Dudley, a Y secretary, a devoted friend of the boys, conducted in the Catskills the first summer camp for boys, so inaugurating what has become a valued feature of the general religious curriculum.⁸ The Y men's experience of one-sex methods and of boy responsiveness under right conditions entered the Sunday School in the form of the boys' department, warmly advocated in the meetings of the Religious Education Association about 1912 by leaders who had tried the plan and seen its remarkable effectiveness.⁹ The movement proved difficult of adaptation to Sunday School conditions and soon dropped from view. Great and permanent however was its significance for the church school. By this channel pupil management of departments, pupil participation in worship, and a realization of the desirability of close grading in upper-school worship assemblies found its way into church-school practice. These features were in the

⁶ *Nelson's Cyclopædia*, art. on "Boys' Brigade, Great Britain," by Sir W. A. Smith.

⁷ See his *The Boy Problem*.

⁸ R. C. Morse, *History of the North American Y. M. C. A.*, p. 233; *Nelson's Cyclopædia*, art. "Y. M. C. A."

⁹ H. W. Gates, in *Religious Education*, June, 1912, p. 234.

boys' departments, as in the Y boys' work, from the beginning. Their workability, quite incredible to the old-line Sunday School leader, soon became as evident as their value for character-culture; and thus the transitory boys' and girls' departments proved a laboratory for the standardizing of self-active intermediate and senior departmental life. The one-sex feature, most prominent at the start, was later seen as a mere "escape mechanism" from the problem of social education in secondary sex relations.

These and other broadenings of the church-school curriculum, with the philosophy that sees their relative place and value, by no means exclude hard pupil-labor on class lessons or make exact and careful Bible study of less than former worth. They do, however, imply new ways of studying and teaching the Bible; and the progress of these innovations is painful and slow. Lovers of God's Word often identify their familiar method of Bible presentation with the sacredness of the divine message itself. The limited-lesson method, used in the Sunday School for half a century before 1872, was and still is to thousands of devout teachers and students the only proper way. The time to challenge this attitude and open the way across North America for other and more effective methods at length arrived.

The forerunner of this innovation was William R. Harper. As a young professor of Semitics at Morgan Park, Chicago, this teaching genius began, in 1881, to conduct at various points summer schools of Hebrew, presenting that supposedly unattractive language on the inductive plan. These schools amazingly popularized Hebrew and Old Testament study. About 1887 or 1888, after his transfer to Yale, Dr. Harper so inspired a college Young Men's Christian Association convention with zeal for thoroughgoing Bible study that on their invitation he began to prepare English Bible studies on the inductive plan for the use of college men. From these begin-

nings arose in 1889 the great work of the American Institute of Sacred Literature.¹⁰

In 1887, as Dr. Harper was beginning his English Bible work, a man of his own aggressive type became pastor of a Congregational church at Spencer, Massachusetts. An army officer with a brilliant Civil War record, he had later been in business; and under the lead of conscience, with a family to support, he had turned to the ministry. His name was Erastus Blakeslee.

Beginning, as Vincent had done, with a class in his own congregation, Mr. Blakeslee applied his friend Harper's new inductive methods, and in 1889 issued, as lessons supplemental to the International series, a set of "analytical outline studies" on the life of Christ. The next year he again tried to avoid conflict with the reigning system by issuing, for April and May, 1890, "written-answer lesson papers" on the uniform selections, in which questions were printed with blanks for the pupil's written answers. But the uniform limited lessons contradicted his convictions as to how Bible lessons should be made. He quickly saw that compromise was impracticable and with a soldier's courage went forward. Securing Harper's collaboration he issued for the year 1891 an independent lesson quarterly, *Outline Inductive Bible Studies, with Written-answer Questions*, in two grades, published in Boston by the Bible Study Publishing Company. For 1892 he added a primary grade, prepared by a noted kindergartner, Miss Lucy Wheelock. In April of that year he called a conference in Boston of educational leaders favorable to lesson reform, where his plans were approved, a rudimentary plan for grading the Sunday School adopted, and the Bible Study Union was organized as a constituency for the new and militant venture. Among those in conference were Phillips Brooks, Lyman Abbott, Dr. J. E. Twitchell of New Haven, and Dr.

¹⁰ F. K. Sanders, in *Biblical World*, March, 1906; *Nelson's Cyclopedia*, art. on "American Institute of Sacred Literature."

Philip A. Nordell. Why he also invited me I do not know; but I went, against the strong dissuasion of my friend Dr. Hurlbut, editor of the Methodist Book Concern. I did not, however, join the movement, as I disapproved of any break with the uniform system.

The Blakeslee lesson system represented a new plan of Sunday School Bible study. Its distinctively new principles, as enumerated in *The Biblical World*, October, 1908, are (1) a connected study of biblical history; (2) a use of all the biblical material, instead of brief, limited-lesson selections, (3) a division of the Bible into several great sections, with a systematic study of each, (4) the orderly arrangement of the lessons through a series of years, somewhat in the way of a curriculum, (5) the use of questions for written answers.

As completed, the system may be called semi-uniform. The Gospels, the apostolic history, and the Old Testament formed the three-year cycle on which the system revolved. This Bible material was arranged in four parallel courses of fifty-two lessons each, for children, boys and girls, young people, and adults respectively; and for the first three of these courses there were two graded quarterly texts each, making in all seven sets of texts on four lesson courses in a single Scriptural field, retraversed every three years. Several characteristic Blakeslee features reappeared later in the International graded lesson system and its published texts. Even the uniform system borrowed from its rival a few improvements, notably the biographical emphasis proposed in 1897 by Dr. A. F. Schauffler and embodied in the cycle for 1900-1905.

Contemporary with Blakeslee's start, came a noteworthy advance toward the experience-centered curriculum in the teaching of young people and adults. The movement for class organization began.

Of this movement there were undoubtedly many anticipations. I recall the early fame of several large organ-

ized Bible classes for men in the city of Washington, D. C. As early as 1869, in the Central Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York, a large men's Bible class was not only organized but incorporated and doing an extensive work; and forty years later it was reported as active still.¹¹ Credit for class organization as an invention in Sunday School method apparently belongs to Marshall A. Hudson of Syracuse, New York; and this would have been much more widely acknowledged, had he not so closely institutionalized a movement that well deserved to have been left universal and free.

In October, 1890, Mr. Hudson, noting the crowd of young men that regularly gathered in front of the Sunday School door of the First Baptist Church, resolved to gain them by setting them at work for others. The sixteen or eighteen who responded to his invitation were organized as a class, with officers, the name "Baraca," and a motto. The class rapidly grew in members and interest. The work became a movement requiring its leader's full time. Five years later it was enlarged to include the Philathea Bible classes for women. Under close general organization and promotion the classes, each chartered and contributing its dues to headquarters, multiplied until in 1913 the membership had reached nearly a million. The Baraca-Philathea fellowship is still well organized, with a membership loyal to its founder's ideals.¹²

In the New York State Sunday School association, no doubt through the Baraca influence, and in that of Illinois, general promotion of men's and women's organized adult classes was by 1904 well under way; and the small round red button or pin with a white center was already widely in use as a badge of organized class membership. In 1907 W. C. Pearce was made International superin-

¹¹ W. C. Pearce, in *Convention Report*, Louisville, 1908, p. 286.

¹² *Nelson's Cyclopedia*, art. on "Baraca-Philathea Bible Classes," by M. A. Hudson.

tendent of the work; and under him a rather rigid standard for adult class organization was fixed, classes were enrolled at state and denominational headquarters, and the idea of organization and certificated recognition was carried down to the "teen-age" classes below. Many classes, Baraca and other, found their lines of service, learned through organization, and profited by the regimentation thus imposed.

From the hour when the zeal of John Wesley noted the possibilities of Raikes's new plan, evangelism has largely motivated Sunday School leaders, colored their methods, and shaped their aims. The literature of the Sunday School is full of records showing with what earnestness the workers labored for the conversion of their pupils.¹³ Among the Chicago evangelicals described in Chapter II and those whose sympathies were with them, evangelism was the Sunday School's primary function. Leaders of this type frequently held, at the close of the session, a prayer meeting, at which appeals were made to the unconverted to accept Christ as their Saviour, and those already Christians were encouraged to pray for their unconverted fellows. Of this evangelistic type was my honored leader and fellow-worker of Gloucester County, New Jersey, later of Philadelphia, Dr. George W. Bailey. In his little Sunday School at Wenonah he was as thorough and energetic as afterward when organizer and chairman of the World's Sunday School Association. In one New Jersey executive committee session he described these prayer meetings and urged them on others.

On this committee was a Congregational Sunday School superintendent of Passaic, Edwin F. Wescott. Need for a definite plan of soul-winning by the school, as a whole, in addition to the work of teachers in classes, had long impressed him. During 1896 he discussed this with Dr. Bailey, who urged him to write on the subject. On

¹³ See, for example, Trumbull's description of Henry P. Haven's efforts, in *A Model Superintendent*, p. 19.

October 19, 1896, the article, brief, clear, practical, was written; and it appeared in the *New Jersey Sunday School Messenger* for November. The idea at once appealed to leaders in other fields, who gave it publicity. In the *International Evangel* of St. Louis, January, 1897, Marion Lawrance wrote:

“It is sometimes well to turn a session of the school into an evangelistic service. ‘Decision Day,’ it is sometimes called, when all the teachers make special effort to secure decisions for Christ. Be sure the school and teachers are ripe for it first, and then enter upon it with much prayer.”

The following June, also in his methods page of this magazine, Mr. Lawrance dealt at length with Decision Day, indicating that in his secretarial travels he had already found it widely in use. He gave suggestions and cautions and reprinted “one of the most common forms of acceptance cards that we have seen.” For many years thereafter the day, sometimes called by other names, was a familiar administrative method. Its principle was embodied in the ten-point standard jointly adopted at Dayton in 1913, referred to in Chapter IV. Often misused, and needing wise and careful adaptation, the experience it seeks holds, as I believe, a necessary and permanent place in the church school curriculum.

The immediate popularity in 1897 of this plan for mass evangelism in the Sunday School reveals the organization standards of the time. The leaders of the cause were still not thinking in graded or departmental terms. Besides the main room and the unorganized primary department, still often called the infant class, and sometimes a Bible class or two, few Sunday Schools of 1896 made any attempt to departmentalize except for reasons of size and architectural necessity. Classes were still, for the most part, taken at convenience from the primary

department, permanently given to new and usually untrained teachers, and placed in the main room to follow the uniform lessons till the group broke up or developed exceptional survival power. The simplicity of this administrative policy, the easy unity of a session program built around one common lesson, and the tempting scope offered for platform lesson talking, combined to make it the superintendent's delight. Steady resistance to every move for separate-room departmentalization was to have been expected and is still far from unknown.

Over against the threefold barrier of a lesson that all classes must study, a service that all departments must attend, and a curricular aim that made age-grading seem a minor distinction,¹⁴ the forces of a higher type of Christian education were gathering. Long and hard was the fight to make the present church school possible. The fundamental influence was supplied by the child-study movement led by President G. Stanley Hall of Clark University, which rapidly and profoundly influenced all education, particularly that of the kindergarten, and stimulated new applications of educational principle to the Sunday School.¹⁵

In line with this movement was the experimental work of a few local leaders to build and organize so that, without disturbing lesson uniformity, pupils and teachers might secure the obvious benefits of gradation. As early as 1867 Lewis Miller, in the pioneer building at Akron, Ohio, balanced an "infant" room in one corner with an "intermediate" room (for those from eight to twelve) in

¹⁴ "This grading of the Sunday School is all right," said Dr. Bailey once to me; "but, really, there are only two grades in the Sunday School, the saved and the unsaved."

¹⁵ Following many earlier studies in child-life, and Elizabeth Harrison's *A Study of Child Nature*, the American movement began about 1891. Articles in *The Forum*, Dec., 1893 and Feb., 1894, well outline its start. Of the applications referred to, one of the most influential was a small Chautauqua pamphlet on story teaching, *Picture-work for Teachers and Mothers*, by Dr. Walter L. Hervev.

the other; and in 1874 Mr. Wanamaker at Bethany, Philadelphia, did the same.¹⁶ From about 1890 on a movement among progressive Sunday Schools to improve grading and departmental work can be discerned. One large school after another would catch an educational vision, study its problem, and launch its independent start, sometimes with features prophetic of what was some day to become the standard plan.¹⁷

It is however one thing to devise and try out a new method and recommend it in speech or book or article, and quite another to add that method to the standard practice of the day. Profound is the capacity of most readers and delegates to hear and not do. A prophetic anticipation, however interesting, cannot properly be counted the beginning of a standard feature. That comes when a real but generally unperceived want is met by the slow steps of invention we saw exemplified by Robert Raikes. A new basic invention was now due, to bridge the gap between the crude but constantly improving primary department and the undifferentiated main room. For Sunday Schools large and small, however, housed and managed, there was need of a junior department, with a specialized body of leaders to keep it steady in age and aim. So far as I have yet learned, the reasoned development of this step toward the church school was on this wise.

In the Grant Street Chapel of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in 1887, the Rev. Charles I. Junkin organized his older primary and younger main-room children into a "junior class" of about sixty, on the model of the undivided primary class of the period. To this class he gave a separate room and

¹⁶ A vivid description of Mr. Miller's building (with detailed ground plan), school organization, session methods, and supplemental studies, by his normal teacher, Miss Goodwin, is preserved in *The Normal Class* (ed. by J. H. Vincent) for March, 1875.

¹⁷ See J. L. Hurlbut, *Seven Graded Sunday Schools*.

much personal attention. He devised for them a plan to stimulate attendance and home study under parental oversight. In June, 1888, to supplement the weekly uniform lessons, he wrote, printed, and had taught to them and the school a set of lessons that included facts about the Bible, map work, and part of the Shorter Catechism. As Junkin and I had been seminary classmates not long before, and as I was then myself a superintendent in Philadelphia and edited the "Ways of Working" column in *The Sunday School Times*, his experiment deeply interested me. I visited the class, noting the interest these boys and girls took in reciting the rather dry information taught them, and seeing how much better they did in a department than like pupils did in the main room.¹⁸

Three years later, in October, 1891, while a pastor at Phillipsburg, New Jersey, I formed an "intermediate department," as I called it, gave it a separate room, and superintended it for six months. It had nine classes of junior boys and girls. In place of the uniform lessons, it studied a course of Bible stories from the Creation to the death of Moses which I selected, prepared, and duplicated for the teachers' and pupils' use; and in addition it learned hymns and Bible facts supplementally. The experiment was interrupted in April, 1892, by my call to become secretary of the New Jersey Sunday School Association. In June and November, 1895, I advocated this method in the *New Jersey Sunday School Messenger*. In 1896 at the Eighth International Sunday School Convention at Boston, a noted primary worker, Mrs. M. G. Kennedy of Philadelphia, spoke on "After the Primary—What?" and thus introduced the novel junior department idea to the constituency at large. At the Asbury Park Summer School of Primary Methods we began with the 1897 session to hold separate conferences for "intermediate teachers (8 to 11)," to develop the fellowship of

¹⁸ See art. by Mr. Junkin in *The Sunday School Times* for Dec. 15, 1888, p. 794.

teachers, as well as the program of this newly recognized section of the Sunday School constituency.

Leadership for the new department was ordinarily taken by the former primary superintendent; the pupils including many of nine, ten, or even eleven years who had lingered, unpromoted, under primary care. With the increase of these departments, there came a much-needed restriction of primary teaching to pupils not over eight years of age. The untrained and inexperienced young people in charge of the main-room junior classes generally came in as junior assistants and for the first time received the benefit of departmental supervision. Where no separate room was available, they kept their classes; but the primary-trained leader with a junior room was likely, after the way of the time, to give most or all of the instruction herself from the platform.

How, from the situation thus far described, the Sunday School world advanced still further in pre-adolescent organization, and, while still under uniform-lesson domination, succeeded without breach of International fellowship and unity in providing for all Sunday Schools a complete set of graded studies, will next be considered.

VIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR GRADED LESSONS

TO establish one series of limited Bible selections as a weekly bond, uniting all Christians in shared study and life, was in 1872 a dream, an adventure on behalf of an ideal. Three years later it had become a triumph, satisfying its thousands of users, vindicating the dreamers, and rewarding the publishers whose consent it had been so hard to secure. The enthusiasm of the early followers rested on a solid experience of benefits received; and it was challenged by no contrary philosophy or conviction wide or clear enough to give the enthusiasts pause. Twenty years later, with benefits felt as strongly as ever, 'child study had arrived, and enterprising opposition lifted its head. The enthusiasm accordingly hardened into a militant orthodoxy, which insisted that "yesterday's agreed upon conclusions must govern today's thought."¹

Over against the large majority of North American Christians who shared this ideal and defended this orthodoxy were four other parties, each with an ideal of its own: (a) the Unitarians and other bodies outside the evangelical fellowship; (b) the Episcopal and most of the Lutheran churches; (c) the followers of Harper and Blakeslee; (d) the students of child nature and need. Here were five distinct ideals. Each party saw what was to them the one supremely worthy goal. The uniform-lesson advocate saw a united community together studying God's holy Word. The Unitarian saw a school of liberal religion, emphasizing love to man. The churchman saw children prepared for confirmation and for

¹ George A. Coe, *The Motives of Men*, p. 166.

Christian service in and through their church. The inductive teacher saw students, awakened to love for the Bible, gaining a firm grip on its contents through guided searches of their own. Votaries of child study saw every child taught Bible and other truth in such selections and with such modes of presentation as would best meet capacity and fill spiritual need.

So early as 1852, while the crude question-book type of Bible instruction still dominated alike the American Sunday School Union and its rival publishers of the denominations, the Unitarian Sunday School Society planned and published, in eight duodecimo volumes, a graded "course of Christian instruction for Sunday Schools and families," by Edward Everett Hale and other able writers.² Among its later texts it issued, in 1884, *The Citizen and the Neighbor*, by Charles F. Dole, a manual for young people's classes in the then new and unfamiliar field of social Christianity. In 1893 it published its "one-topic, three-grade" series, a seven-year course in three grades, somewhat on the Blakeslee plan; and in 1909, as the International graded lists began to appear, it also began its fine "Beacon Series," in twelve books. For lack of coöperative intercourse, the influence of this pioneering upon the later advances of the evangelical forces was slight.

The so-called "joint diocesan system" of the Episcopal church, intended to secure the benefits of uniformity throughout that communion in the United States, was begun in 1877, with lessons edited by the Rev. Richard Newton, D. D., of Philadelphia. In 1898 Bishop Henry C. Potter of New York and the Rev. Pascal Harrower,

² The first book, *Early Religious Lessons*, was for pupils under ten. Then followed yearly grade courses on *Palestine and the Hebrew People*, *Lessons on the Old Testament*, *The Life of Christ*, *The Books and Characters of the New Testament*, *Religious Duties and Christian Morals*, *Doctrines of Scripture*, and, for pupils of sixteen and seventeen, a textbook of *Scenes from Christian History*.

organizing a diocesan Sunday School commission, began a movement for gradation and educational advance, one outcome of which was a new "subject-graded" curriculum for Episcopal schools. The texts of this course, successively revised, were later known as the "Christian Nurture Series." In the Lutheran Church (General Council) the Rev. Theodore E. Schmauk began about 1894 the creation of a complete religious curriculum, beginning with a series of quarterly pamphlets, *In Mother's Arms* and *At Mother's Knee*, to guide, through the mothers, infants and those of nursery age.³

Besides these three strong series of graded lesson texts, representing denominations wholly or partly outside the International fellowship, two others, descendants of the Harper-Blakeslee inductive movement, entered the field. Under the inspiration of President W. R. Harper of the University of Chicago there was developed from about 1900 a series of substantial textbooks representing advanced educational ideals and biblical scholarship, which by 1910, as the "Constructive Bible Studies," was complete for all grades from kindergarten to maturity.⁴ The Blakeslee semi-uniform texts, on a cycle expanded to six years, while continued in print, were in 1908 succeeded by a series of quarterly pamphlets known as the "Completely Graded Series," on lines drafted by Professors G. A. Coe and C. F. Kent; and in 1911 both of the Blakes-

³ The system, adopted in 1895 by the General Council, provides texts and materials for the kindergarten ("Wonderland"), primary ("Workland"), and junior ("Pictureland") ages, and for adolescence seven yearly grades traversing Bible story, readings, history, geography, biography, teaching, and outlines of books and material; all with much memory and supplemental work.

⁴ The series represented the studies of the Hyde Park Baptist Sunday School of Chicago, of which President Harper was superintendent. Its principles and outline course are given in E. D. Burton and Shailer Mathews, *Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School*; see also Georgia L. Chamberlin, *An Introduction to the Bible for Teachers of Children*, the fourth-grade text of the course.

lee systems were taken over by Charles Scribner's Sons. Dr. Blakeslee lived to see in this projected series, the realization of his original ideal, an independent course for every year. He died July 12, 1908.

Neither these lesson makers, however, nor the writers of contemporary special texts and studies of the curricular problem,⁵ nor yet the Religious Education Association, whose conventions and section conferences and commissions from 1903 on, brought the progressive forces together, commanded the strategy of progress. All told they comprised but a fraction of the North American Sunday School army. In that army it was only the exceptional school that entered the general market to shop for supplies. The multitude took what their publishing houses made and encouraged them to use. The way to curricular reform for these masses, therefore, lay not through any fellowship of protest against International lesson conservatism, nor through independent issue of graded lesson material, however fine. It must start within the fellowship of state, provincial, and International unity, as an effort to overturn that fellowship's domination by the cult of uniformity, achieving some body of limited curricular objectives through action by the International convention and its lesson committee. Such action would reach and guide the lesson publishers, denominational and independent, and from them would flow into the life of the Sunday Schools on the field. Only from within this fellowship, indeed, could such an outcome be seen as feasible; and at but one locality were circumstances such as to make possible an effective start. That locality, as we shall see, was New Jersey.

⁵ Texts such as the lesson books for Bible classes by Henry T. Sell issued by Revell about 1902, and the two years of kindergarten Sunday School lessons by Florence U. Palmer published by Macmillan in 1900 and 1901. See Burton and Mathews, as cited; S. B. Haslett, *The Pedagogical Bible School*; G. W. Pease, *An Outline of a Bible-school Curriculum*; R. M. Hodge, *A Syllabus of Religious Education* (1904).

These competitors with uniformity, if we except the phenomenally early Unitarians, were not the first to demand lesson gradation. In the sixties a son of the valiant Lyman Beecher, Thomas K. Beecher, planned for his church school at Elmira, New York, a six-grade course of Bible studies, and held to it through those years when to use anything outside the ruling system was heresy and schism. Two Baptist lovers of the Word in West Philadelphia, the Rev. Edwin H. Bronson and Miss Anna T. Pearce, brought out in 1885 their own "constructive method of Bible study," with pamphlet texts and articles in *The Sunday School Times*. The story of Dr. Blakeslee's effective revolt has been already followed. Following that, the American Baptist Publication Society, in 1892, responding to a strong demand, published an "inductive" quarterly for seniors, which used a modified form of the uniform selections; but at the Northern Baptist Convention the following May the editor, Dr. Blackall, averted a complete break with uniformity only by promising three completely independent series, a senior course really inductive, a junior inductive course, and a course for the primary class.⁶ Announcement of these outlaw issues, by a house supposed to be loyal to the true faith, set the International convention, St. Louis, 1893, in a fury. It took all of Mr. Jacobs's authority to get for Dr. Blackall even a hearing; and hardly had he finished his moderate statement of facts and reasons than all over the house delegates sprang to their feet, eager to reply that there must be nothing but the one uniform lesson.

Even on the floor of the Indianapolis convention of 1872, one young Baptist preacher dared to see a different

⁶ The inductive courses proved unprofitable and were soon discontinued. The primary course, *Two Years with Jesus*, was more successful. To write it Dr. Blackall secured Miss Juliet E. Dimock (later Mrs. John M. Dudley), co-inventor of the cradle roll, who with her sister was a member of the Newark Primary Union soon to be described.

vision and voice an antagonizing ideal. Philip S. Evans from Willimantic, Connecticut, near the close of the long debate, opposed general lesson uniformity and asked for three independent lessons in three grades, to permit of adapted teaching and graded progress through the school.⁷ Mr. Jacobs gave the speech a light answer; and with only ten dissentients the resolution triumphantly passed.

The sequence of events which led to the creation and introduction of the International graded lessons, and through these to the curricular advances of more recent years, began in an obscure circle of primary Sunday School teachers and continued for many years to develop unobserved.⁸ It was natural that the movement should thus start. Sunday Schools of the uniform lesson era had many teachers; but only the "infant" or primary teacher and his or her associates held a graded and consequently a permanent position: the others were tutors to unpromoted and therefore transient groups. Only these primary teachers, therefore, had a permanent concern for their own educational advance. This concern they conspicuously showed in the primary rallies and special sessions at National and International conventions; in the city unions they formed in New York in 1871, Philadelphia in 1879, and Washington in 1881; and in the National Primary Union which, under the lead of Mrs. Wilbur F. Crafts, these city unions in 1884 united to organize. In these and other large city unions, the members gathered weekly to hear and see some noted leader teach the following Sunday's uniform lesson as if to a

⁷ I found this long forgotten protest in the record; and later by good fortune I found the speaker, still living in Brooklyn. I have his letter, corroborating the incident and adding that if he had had any encouragement, he could have said much more.

⁸ Further details may be found in J. R. Sampey, *The International Lesson System*, and in my articles in *The Church School* (Methodist Episcopal) for June, July, August and November, 1922.

primary class, and incidentally to exchange and discuss other features of method. The union of Newark, New Jersey, was forced out of this passivity; and consequently it began within its own rank and file to develop leadership power.

Formed, February 19, 1870, as "The Newark Association of Infant Sunday School Teachers," this union, three months later, began to meet weekly for a primary lesson, from 1873 the uniform lesson, taught by Mrs. Samuel W. Clark. In 1880 their beloved leader left for Philadelphia; and rather than disband they reluctantly undertook to present the weekly lesson themselves in turn. In 1892 they began to hold an annual institute. In 1894 they joined me in planning and holding, at Asbury Park, the first "summer school of primary methods." Primary unions were now common in other states and soon became common in New Jersey, while the annual summer school drew to its week-long fellowship students from many fields. But the Newark Union continued for some years to be the leading factor in the state's primary advances.⁹ Among the leaders it trained for wider service were Mrs. Pettit and Mrs. Dudley, already mentioned, Miss Josephine L. Baldwin, and Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes.

While a force Internationally loyal and capable of curricular leadership was thus developing, an International situation was also developing that was to open to this leadership its strategic chance. Desire among the primary teachers for something better than an adapted uniform Bible lesson was growing. Even the outspokenly faithful were conscious that there was an issue and that it was getting acute. At the same convention that denounced Dr. Blackall and the Blakeslee-lesson antagonists, the primary teachers heard from Mrs. M. G. Kennedy of Philadelphia an earnest defense of one lesson

⁹ Julia H. Nichols, *Historical Sketch of the Newark Primary Union*.

for all. Following this, without reply or discussion, a resolution prepared by Mrs. Crafts was unanimously adopted, asking for the continuance of the one-lesson plan, "confident that the International lesson committee will carefully consider the little children in the selection of the lesson material." Meeting me in the lobby just after this vote was taken, the International Primary Union secretary, Mr. Israel P. Black, apologized for it as a mere vote of confidence in the Lesson Committee, needed in view of the attacks upon them. He knew well that not all in his constituency were of the mind expressed.

The following March saw the Lesson Committee, at Philadelphia, in extended conference with its representative friends, including the officers of the International Primary Union. These, with Mrs. Crafts alone dissenting, reversed the St. Louis action and boldly asked for a separate optional primary course.¹⁰ This the Committee accordingly prepared, dated for use in 1896. The outline, published on September 28, 1895, came far too late for use by any but a weekly publication. The *Sunday School Times*, which printed the Committee's outline, had a weekly article on the lessons throughout the year; but these, lacking pictures, cards, or other helps, were used by few. What the primary teachers wanted, therefore, and whether any but a handful wanted anything, was still far from clear. In March, 1897, following a further conference, the Lesson Committee appointed Mr. Jacobs, Dr. A. F. Schaufler, and three other members to sound the primary teachers, learn what they wanted, and bring in a few one-year courses as illustrations of these wants. This committee took votes at many conventions and primary union meetings; always with the ringing reply, "Nothing but the uniform lessons!" By that time most of the Newark and Asbury Park circle were feeling rather strongly the other way.

¹⁰ *The Sunday School Times*, March 24, April 7, 1894.

How this feeling was reached requires explanation. The programs of the first three annual New Jersey summer schools show not a trace of graded distinction. Every student was supposed to be a "primary teacher," with a "class" of ten, or a hundred, or two or three hundred children from three or four to ten or eleven. A very few had started junior departments; and I recall but one approximation to a beginners' department.¹¹ Divided departments, with class teachers, were not unknown; but the work of these helpers was supplemental, the department leader teaching the lesson for the day. Mrs. Barnes, and a few other leading spirits, cherished the ideal, often expressed by Mrs. Crafts, obvious enough save for the obliterating force of uniformity, of a departmentalized children's division. But how to impart that novel concept to the women of uniform-lesson experience, who formed our student body, was a problem. Why organize departments, with no separate lessons to teach?

At Asbury Park, in the 1896 session, and at two other summer schools held in New Jersey that year, Mrs. Barnes used one period to develop on a blackboard, by group discussion, properly adapted departmental grouping of the many items of supplemental teaching then in use. I watched those teachers grow, as dissent turned by degrees to acquiescence. Many for the first time realized the unwisdom of using the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and other hallowed forms, as lessons for the youngest children. The table thus worked out, showing proper studies for beginners and for primary and junior children, with residual studies for those of twelve and older, was promptly printed, in the *New*

¹¹ Miss Martha K. Lawson (later Mrs. F. W. Ayer), in North Baptist Church, Camden, N. J., teaching an "infant department" of children of seven and under. In *The Kindergarten of the Church*, Mary J. C. Foster advocated a weekday church kindergarten, or at least a Sunday kindergarten class; but her plan had little observable following.

Jersey Sunday School Messenger, September, 1896, revised, developed, issued as an International leaflet, and for years, in many editions, used throughout the North American field.¹² Crude and material-centered as they were, these "graded supplemental lessons for the elementary departments" taught thousands to departmentalize their pupils, develop their departmental courses, and ask for more.

Equally needed, alike by leaders and led, was light on what constitutes success in children's Bible teaching. At this same school of 1896 a noted kindergartner, Miss Anna W. Williams of Philadelphia, criticized about all that the primary teachers were doing in their long, florid, and artificial lessons. They had borrowed the symbolism of the kindergarten with little conception of its meaning and proper use. These lectures left the would-be primary leaders very much at sea. But in the spring of 1897 another kindergartner, Miss Margaret J. Cushman, presented to the Newark teachers a new and constructive ideal of Bible teaching for little children. Her lectures were repeated at the summer school. The fourth lecture, on "First Relations to God," made clear to all how inadequate were all lessons for early childhood then in use. Deeply moved, the school later that day heard a paper by Miss Julia E. Peck on the current issue of separate primary lessons. Her contention was that for primary lessons neither classes nor teachers were yet ready. What was needed was a separate class and separate teaching for the children under six. "These beginners," as she called them, needed lessons made to fit their needs.

The hour seemed ripe for action. As officers of the school, Mrs. Barnes, Mrs. Pettit, and I conferred that evening, sought Miss Cushman, and explained our desire as a school, first to learn how to teach Bible truth to the "beginners," whose spiritual needs she and Miss Peck had made so clear, and then, having found the way, to

¹² I. P. Black, *Practical Primary Plans*, p. 137.

open it wide to all. Only a lesson course Internationally issued could reach all Sunday Schools; only a biblical course would be Internationally acceptable. Lesson specifications must be limited to a title, a golden text, and one or more Bible passages to suggest the teacher's preparation; these must be free for use by all; and the course must cover two years. We asked her therefore to prepare, that night, the outline of such a course, conformed to the laws of the little child's unfolding life, and to present it to the school the next day. The Lesson Committee, I said, was even then seeking for such courses; and we wanted to submit one as an embodiment of what this group wished.

By ten o'clock next morning the course was ready, and Miss Cushman submitted it to the school. It was in eight quarterly parts, beginning and ending with stories of Jesus. To all, even the most conservative, it seemed so right and so beautiful that if there were to be separate lessons at all, they should be like these. After discussion I offered resolutions approving "a separate course of lessons, to be issued by the International lesson committee, for beginners up to the age of about six years, with details as already noted; and submitting to the Committee an outline, "prepared at our request by Miss Margaret J. Cushman, as indicating such an order of topics as would meet our needs." The resolution of approval elicited this response: Yes, 113; no, 1; prefer not to vote, 6; silent, about 20. To the details all agreed.¹³

By November the International sub-committee of inquiry had this course in outline by quarters, with Miss Cushman's explanations, and with the school's voted action. The summer school at Chicago, started that year, voted against a separate course, as did many other bodies; and as neither the Committee nor the field had

¹³ *International Evangel* (St. Louis), Sept., 1897; *New Jersey Sunday School Messenger*, Nov., 1897.

yet considered such a separation of the primary class as the New Jersey proposal implied, the issue was confused, and the Committee, naturally, took no action.

But the New Jersey group had only begun. The next step was to complete the course in detail, publish the lessons, and organize a body of users in whose classes the material could be tried out and the novel policy of a beginners' class and course demonstrated as feasible and sound. Several of our 1897 students went home to get ready for beginners' work, when lessons were available. At the 1898 school Miss Cushman taught five lessons from her course, furnished in printed outline. Our state association monthly printed the Cushman lessons for use in 1899; and for 1900 and 1901 the course again appeared in quarterly form. The Cushman Club, formed in September, 1899, united the small but widening company of the pioneers. With meager resources we went on, the quarterly partly paying its way. The secretary, Miss Elizabeth D. Paxton, financed the deficit and did most of the work. The club, through an employed speaker, voiced its cause at an exposition congress at Buffalo; and the *International Evangel* at St. Louis promoted its lessons over the country. By April, 1901, with fewer than two hundred members, the tiny enterprise had made such a stir that when Dr. Blackall at New York organized the Sunday School Editorial Association and with his party sat in conference with the Lesson Committee, he told them that they must do something or their leadership would be lost. And they did. They hastily produced a one-year course for beginners, which, as before, appeared in *The Sunday School Times* during 1902. Cheered by this partial victory, the now greatly broadened forces of the movement pressed on.

Miss Cushman was now Mrs. George B. Haven, with a "beginner" of her own. She kept on writing the lessons, however, at the club's salary of five dollars a month. Our other wheelhorse, Miss Josephine L. Baldwin, edited

the lessons into book form, with simple cards and pictures for class use; and, the Fleming H. Revell Company joining the adventure, the two volumes of Mrs. Haven's *Bible Lessons for Little Beginners* duly appeared in November, 1901 and August, 1902 respectively. They had a gratifying sale. The royalties in fact took care of the deficit; and when that had been repaid, these were properly assigned to the author.

For the crusaders the work of those Cushman lessons was about over. Before the books appeared the movement had made its desired impression. It had established that a beginners' class was feasible and desirable; that the Cushman lessons or lessons like them were usable and if furnished would be used; and that such lessons could be outlined in specifications such as the Lesson Committee might properly issue. The one-year course they did issue was not our goal. A two-year lesson cycle was needed; and much of this one-year course proved too advanced for beginners' minds. Mrs. Barnes, therefore, as leader of the cause, planned to seek from the coming International convention at Denver, 1902, a resolution approving a two-year International beginners' course. With Mr. W. N. Hartshorn, chairman of the convention's program committee, she arranged and held a three-day "Western School of Methods" preceding the convention; and this school without recorded dissent resolved to thank the Lesson Committee for its one-year course and ask for a two-year course as better meeting the workers' needs.

The primary forces might so resolve; but the main host that gathered at Denver was still of the old mind. Uniformity's great champion, B. F. Jacobs, had died but three days before. The president of the (London) Sunday School Union, Mr. Francis Flint Belsey, had come over to oppose any tampering with the one International lesson, and to protest against the recent unauthorized action of the American section of the Committee in issuing that beginners' course without consultation. Had

the resolution approving a two-year special course come up alone, it would have been stoutly opposed and probably voted down.

But from another quarter the help we needed came. Blakeslee lessons were still going strong. Leaders of thought and education were chafing against uniformity and demanding advanced International lessons. In response to the request of certain editors, the Lesson Committee had drafted a two-year advanced Bible lesson course and had it ready for approval. This move aroused deep interest in President Harper's circle at Chicago. But on the eve of the convention, word of the project came to the energetic editor of the Methodist Sunday School publications, Dr., afterward Bishop, Thomas B. Neely. Seeing in these advanced lessons a menace to the popularity of his highly profitable senior lesson quarterly, he hastened across the continent to block at any cost so unfortunate a move.

In the convention both resolutions were presented, the 'beginners' from the school of methods, the advanced from the Lesson Committee. Demanding the floor, Dr. Neely gave to the beginners' course his ready and off-hand approval. He saw no objection to a separate course for little ones not yet able to read. But these advanced lessons for the Bible classes were in his view objectionable in the extreme. The debate was prolonged and keen. Finally, to resolve the tangle, Dr. Alexander Henry, for the resolutions committee, offered, as a substitute for both resolutions, "that the Lesson Committee be authorized to issue an optional beginners' course for special demands and uses," but "that at this time we are not prepared to adopt a series of advanced lessons to take the place of the uniform lessons in the adult grade of the Sunday School," which was Dr. Neely's conception of what the advanced lessons were intended to be. The conservatives rejoiced at their chance, and those dangerous advanced lessons went down hard; while by that

happy "sacrifice hit" the beginners' lessons finished their bases and ran safely home.

The participants in this odd game separated; Dr. Neely rejoicing in the safety of his menaced circulations; the advanced-lesson advocates mourning over the International Sunday School Association's strange "unwillingness to lead in the improvement of the Sunday School according to this new ideal," and seizing the occasion to call at Chicago for the following February a convention to organize the Religious Education Association;¹⁴ and Mrs. Barnes to begin the new and broader campaign for which these contestants had unwittingly opened the way.¹⁵

In this campaign the Lesson Committee's part was well done. In consultation with the International Primary Department, and profiting at many points by the Cushman example, they published, on August 29, 1903, in *The Sunday School Times*, a fairly child-centered two-year beginners' course, starting in September, with undated lessons arranged by themes and leading up to Thanksgiving Day and other seasonal occasions. This publisher also announced, with the lesson list, a beginners' teacher's quarterly, to be prepared, like its treatment of the one-year course, by Mr. George H. Archibald. Mrs. Barnes, not content to rest in what other interpreters of these specifications might volunteer, sought a publisher of educational vision and faith and capital enough to invest a large sum in illustrations and attractive form. She found him in Mr. John H. Scribner, busi-

¹⁴ Invitation to sign the call, postmarked at Chicago, October 3, 1902, and signed by William Rainey Harper for the Council of Seventy of the American Institute of Sacred Literature, by whom the call was later issued.

¹⁵ Mrs. Barnes had been since 1895 state primary superintendent for Pennsylvania, and since 1896 chairman of the central committee of the International Primary Department; and on January 1, 1903, she became International Primary and Junior Superintendent.

ness superintendent of the Presbyterian Board of Publication at Philadelphia; and in Miss Marion Thomas of Newark she found a kindergarten-trained primary Sunday School teacher competent to produce effective copy. The *Westminster Beginners' Lessons*, a teacher's quarterly, with accompanying sets of pictures, was thus produced, beginning with September, 1904; and with its help beginners' classes were promoted throughout the International field.

A conference at Winona Lake, Indiana, in August, 1903, called by Chairman Hartshorn of the International executive committee, showed by how slim a margin that lesson resolution had come through. All the issues of the hour were on the docket, and all shades of lesson opinion were represented. The chair submitted "an important letter from publishers," which urged no mere "optional" lesson or lessons, but frank abandonment of uniformity in favor of five lesson courses, each distinct. The Denver situation was mild compared to that which raged around that proposal. The conservatives became convinced that the 'beginners' concession at Denver had been a fearful blunder. The many friends of the beginners' course thenceforth promoted it at conventions against all that the friends of uniformity could say and do.

The International convention at Toronto, 1905, saw the cause of graded lessons moving solidly forward. On advanced lessons the convention split nearly even and then, reconsidering, unanimously approved them; but the course when issued had no takers and soon dropped from view. Much more significant was the move made by Mrs. Barnes and her friends to bring to Toronto for the children's work institute Professor Edward P. St. John. In six lectures, with large charts of childhood and adolescence, he taught to thousands, through these delegates, the principles underlying the demand for lessons adapted to childhood's graded needs. The gain of that

move was soon felt in many parts of the International field.

With a set of graded supplemental lessons, sponsored by Mrs. Barnes's department, now widely in use, and with departmentalization of children's teaching proceeding apace, the Sunday School Editorial Association, for their meeting in July, 1906, asked of Mrs. Barnes whether the primary teachers now desired a separate primary course to follow that for the beginners. "They do," replied she, in an ably reasoned paper; "a three-year graded primary course, and beyond that a four-year graded junior course, making nine years of lessons for the years from four to twelve. The revolving uniform-lesson cycle can never be a proper basis for the constructive teaching to these children of the lessons that they all, year after year, need to learn." The paper was received with appreciation and made converts for the cause.

A month later, at the annual meeting of the International executive committee, Mrs. Barnes made a far-seeing move. On the large International staff she knew of not a man sufficiently friendly to graded lessons to stand by her. She had already explained her plan to me. "These people," said she, "are waking up. Before we know it they will come to us and say, 'We are ready now to give you graded lessons: what lessons do you want?' And we don't know! We must start at once to work out elementary graded lessons, so as to have our list ready." Further points in her plan were: to enlist the coöperation of the friendly lesson editors; to retain freedom by not admitting these to a share in the task; to keep independent of all subsidies; to gather for the task as large, representative, and competent a company as could be assembled and continued at their own charges; to avert unfriendly interference by secrecy till the course was in shape; and, forestalling later charges of neglected official duty, to secure from her executive committee authority to expend the time and work which

the enterprise would involve. Reminding this committee that the great International Association should lead and not follow in lesson development, she now asked of them authority to coöperate on the graded lesson problem with lesson editors and others interested. The committee, having no suspicion of her plans, readily gave permission as desired.

Thus it came to pass that on Friday, October 19, 1906, in St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, Newark, at Mrs. Barnes's invitation, fifteen persons assembled to face together the novel and then unsolved problem of graded lessons for the primary and junior years. They were Josephine L. Baldwin, Mrs. J. Woodbridge Barnes, Marianna C. Brown, Frances Weld Danielson, Florence H. Darnell, Ralph E. Diffendorfer, E. Morris Fergusson, Alice B. Hamlin, Mrs. M. G. Kennedy, Mrs. D. M. Krick, Martha K. Lawson, Elizabeth D. Paxton, Edward P. St. John, Rose Scott, and Marion Thomas. Several others, also invited, could not participate, and a few dropped out; while others, notably Milton S. Littlefield, came in later. We divided, one group taking the beginners' and primary problem, the other the junior. The existing beginners' course was quickly seen to need complete recasting, much of it being primary material. Several months were spent in studies of child need and materials available for meeting it. We regularly gave two or three days of hard work a month, the members coming at their own expense, afterward refunded, from near Boston on one side and Pittsburgh on the other. Finally, taking up each year's course in turn, construction of the weekly outline began. In about a year we received assurance that not only the editors but the Lesson Committee itself would see us through; and for the hearty backing of the Methodist editor, Dr. J. T. McFarland, we had special cause to be grateful. Specialists joined for particular years; Dr. Ira M. Price of the Lesson Committee sat with us twice; each member made his or her contribution; and

often, after days of puzzling, we felt assured that the wisdom embodied in our final arrangement was higher than our own. By April, 1908, the nine years' schedule, almost finished, and most of it in print, was sent on to Dr. Schauffler.

Outside this silently creative group discussion continued keen. In the spring of 1907 the Lesson Committee, in Boston, conferred with others upon lesson problems; after which eight of their number, with International executive leaders, proceeded to London for an extended conference with the committee's British section.¹⁶ The British constituency, it was learned, stood, as Evans had stood in 1872, for three grades only, primary, intermediate, and senior; and they strongly desired that the International lessons, on a six-year cycle, be continued as a world-wide uniform course for the intermediate or middle grade. The American committeemen returned, having united in resolutions approving the three-grade plan.

This tentative agreement on a policy the opposite of ours made confusion worse confounded. Extremists seemed further apart than ever. Mr. Hartshorn resolved to try once more his favorite plan. A face-to-face conference had failed at Winona Lake; but it might now win. In his Boston home, January 2 and 3, 1908, he gathered fifty-four leaders representing the Lesson Committee and other responsibilities and all shades of lesson opinion. Together we sought for a way of peace. At first the divergences seemed insurmountable; but at last discussion focused on what praise Dr. Frank K. Sanders could give to the uniform lessons and what need Justice MacLaren would confess for a graded system. Two resolutions were finally worded to satisfy all—commendation, continuance, and development for the uniform system;

¹⁶ *American-British Lesson Committee in Conference* (1907); *The Sunday School Times*, July 27, 1907, p. 373. This London Conference was part of the American delegates' trip to the World's Convention at Rome.

completion by the Lesson Committee of a thoroughly graded course for the whole school. The "formula concordia" was found! Like a triumphal procession this pair of resolutions went through one convention after another; and at the International convention at Louisville, supported by the Lesson Committee, they passed without one unfriendly speech or vote.

At first sight this authoritative action, so happily reached by so adventurous a way, seemed like more than a fulfillment of the vision seen eleven years before. But Mrs. Barnes knew better. As before, victory had but opened the way. The lesson lists must be released; their specifications and ideals must be effectively embodied in printed texts; the series must be continued through the unknown years of adolescence; and, greatest problem of all, the lessons must be received and assimilated on the vast and unready field. For all these campaigns, particularly the second and third, she was strategist and unseen leader; though at this Louisville convention she retired from the International staff, taking service under Dr. McFarland in the Methodist editorial rooms in New York.

The Lesson Committee, accepting with minor changes the lists prepared by their anonymous friends, and consulting the publishers' wishes as to dates, released in January, 1909, the first-year beginners', first-year primary, and first-year junior courses; the others of the nine-year elementary series following in yearly turn. All course work began with the first Sunday of October: in eighth months, therefore, the first parts of these three must be ready. Only among the creators of these courses, as Mrs. Barnes saw it, could interpreters fully sympathetic with their ideals be found; and only by a wide syndication of publishers' capital and energy and editorial wisdom could the needed typography, illustration, and general effect be supplied. Experiments must be tried, many pages arranged, rejected, and reset, and

copy produced under heavy pressure. But with persistence, diplomacy, and contagious courage the leader realized her goals. Four strong denominational houses, Congregational, Methodist-Episcopal, Methodist-Episcopal South, Presbyterian, published the lessons together. They were written by three of the conference group—beginners, Miss Danielson; primary, Miss Thomas; junior, Miss Baldwin. Many other denominations taking imprint editions, this "syndicate issue" of the International graded lessons became in effect the standard of the field. The Baptist "Keystone" issues were written and published separately.

Before the release of these first-year elementary courses the Lesson Committee asked Mrs. Barnes to reorganize her conference group for creation of courses covering the eight remaining years.¹⁷ This was done, the children's workers retiring and new specialists coming on.¹⁸ So rapid was this new group's progress that in January, 1910, with the second-year elementary releases, the course for pupils of thirteen also appeared. Its aim was to help the pupil to find his personal ideal in nine months of brief character-studies from the Old Testament, with three months' study of like characters from modern times. For the second intermediate year six months of like New Testament studies were given, with followers of Christ from church history, and a quarter on David Livingstone; all leading up to a nine-

¹⁷ Intermediate, 13 to 16; senior, 17 to 20. This departmental scheme, adopted in 1904, was already being questioned; and it was superseded by the present plan in 1917. Each year-grade however was treated independently, grades being grouped as schools saw fit.

¹⁸ This group consisted of Mrs. Barnes, chairman, with Marianna C. Brown, Isaac B. Burgess, Ralph E. Diffendorfer, E. Morris Fergusson, Milton S. Littlefield, Henry H. Meyer, Edgar M. Robinson, Edward P. St. John, Mrs. William L. Smith, Sidney A. Weston, and Benjamin S. Winchester. Professor Price of the Lesson Committee and many other scholars contributed to the work, especially in the senior grades.

months' dramatic biographical study of the life of Jesus for pupils of fifteen. The unconventional originality of these Sunday School lessons made a sensation. As written for the syndicate they, like the elementary texts, were widely and gratefully received, the demand far exceeding the publishers' expectations; but they also provoked bitter attacks, the Presbyterians, after much controversy, abandoning the whole "closely graded" system for a departmental course modified from the graded outline and issued by a syndicate of its own. Southern Presbyterians and Baptists also officially opposed the system, the latter accepting it after the Committee had supplied alternative lists for those presenting extra-biblical material.

For pupils of sixteen the conference provided a year of studies in Christian living, and for those of seventeen a six-months' vocational course on the world as a field for Christian service, with three months on the problems of youth in social life. These life-situation studies were well received. To complete the system a three-year survey was drafted, with a year of historical and literary studies in the Old Testament, a like year in the New, and a year's sweep through church history. The last, *The Spirit of Christ Transforming the World*, ready in 1914, was deemed too extra-biblical, though released by the Committee as an alternative course. With help from social students a substitute year on *The Bible and Social Living* was prepared; and with the release of this course on August 4, 1915, the enterprise of creating an International graded lesson system was completed.

IX

THE CHURCH SCHOOL ESTABLISHED

THE TEACHING CHURCH

AT Toronto, in June, 1930, four thousand delegates met in a great church-school convention. Over the platform hung a motto which Superintendent Vieth and his associates on the International Council staff had set up as a slogan of progress. The motto read, "Every church a school in Christian living."

Each half of this motto is both ancient and modern. That the end of gospel teaching is not knowledge of a book, or enrollment in a church, or conformity to a cult, or confession of a creed, or acceptance of a formula, but realization of a life, to which each of these contributes as means, and without which all are but dead husks of religion, is a fundamental New Testament truth which this century has restated and embodies in its programs and standards of religious education. Jesus' way of life, for childhood, youth, and maturity, is the constantly unfolding objective of the modern Christian leader, as it was of Paul who interpreted that life to the converts of Corinth, Philippi and Rome. The religious school, for Christians, is primarily a school of Christian living. But that the church, instead of having and conducting such a school, is in all its parts and functions itself that school,—that was also an apostolic conception, overshadowed and forgotten till revisioned by the prophets of the latter days. To one of the most clear-eyed of these, John H. Vincent, is attributed the daring challenge, "All the church in the Sunday School; all the Sunday School in the church"; and when his young suc-

cessors, half a century later, lifted their banner at Toronto, they, from a freshly gained height, caught the same prophetic gleam.

The teaching church, then, forms the true goal of that progress in religious teaching through which the Hebrew and Jewish people and the Christian Church have come. Here and there a pastor, with that vision in his soul, seeks in his own field to make it real. But a church whose pastor, officers, Sunday School, societies, congregation, and trustees share this ideal and strive through all their activities to realize "the Way" is still so rare that to most modern leaders in religious education it has seemed wiser, while holding firmly to the teaching church as an ultimate end, to set up for present attainment, as a necessary preliminary, the church school,—a school of Christian living maintained and administered by a church. Before this proximate objective could be realized in the life of the churches, its constituent parts had to be made ready, and the concept had to be seen, cleared of ambiguity, and accepted as a standard goal.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The formative nucleus of the church school is and must be the Sunday School. In seniority this antedates by a century its eldest parish partner, the young people's society. All these current parish auxiliaries make statistically a scattered showing; but where the church is, and often where it is not, there is the Sunday School. In scope each of these covers some special age, interest, or sex: the Sunday School is universal. In almost every church the Sunday School is a strong and dependable resource; while to find the others equally effective in and for their limited range is the happy exception. "The Sunday church school" is but a part of the church school; but that part is of its very backbone.

In the preceding chapters of Part II we have seen the Sunday School prepared, step by step, for its high func-

tion as organizing center of the church school that was to be. Its original age-range of from six to fourteen was extended, first to include adults in need of elementary instruction, then infants below the age of reading and lesson study, and then the middle and later adolescents. These infant and Bible classes, originally separate, found a place in the Sunday School's organization and common life. From the Bible, with many unconscious additions, was shaped more and more wisely its curriculum; and the device of lesson uniformity, whatever its other effects, brought the educational advantage of a unified, biblical, and for the most part, worshipful platform service. Juvenile teaching method was vastly and steadily improved. Inductive studies, widely adopted, stimulated Bible interest and appreciation. Departmentalization was effected, first in the elementary, then in the higher grades. Graded lessons reformed and refined the curriculum, creating demand for helps of still higher order. Training for voluntary and semi-professional leadership was promoted, perfected, and utilized for at least the partial preparation of a portion of the teaching forces of the Sunday School. All this was accomplished before the thinking leaders of the cause had come to see and voice the need for a church school that should broaden the range of the Sunday School's possible service and attain ideals that it was not given the earlier leaders to see.

About half a century ago, a group of adjunct and affiliated agencies, factors in a coming larger unity, began to share with the Sunday School the educational responsibility of the church. Temperance and missionary bands, societies, and circles, with service organizations of many names and types, had long formed a part of the parish life of some churches. To these were now added, in more or less standardized form, the young people's society, the cradle roll, the home department, and the boys' brigade, that precursor of a multitude of

early adolescent training agencies. Of these the cradle roll and the home department have, since their adoption, been counted as parts of the Sunday School and have touched its life at many points. Yet with equal logic both might be viewed, with the young people's society and the boys' club or troop, as service arms of the church. The vacation church school, under varying names, joined these adjuncts in 1901.

In 1904, Professor George Albert Coe in his book, *Education in Religion and Morals*, sounded a call for a reinterpretation of the Sunday School's functions, a correlation of the agencies of instruction and expression within the church, and such an educational leadership of these local forces as would make the church a school. At the Boston convention of the Religious Education Association, the following year, Dr. W. C. Bitting restated Coe's vision, admitting that its realization presented many unsolved problems. A committee of Presbyterians, appointed in 1908 by the General Assembly of that denomination, and headed by President George B. Stewart of Auburn Theological Seminary, saw and phrased the proximate ideal—a school combining, correlating, and completing the church's agencies of education.¹ In June, 1910, Professor Ernest D. Burton voiced the concept still more clearly and fully, adding, as an essential feature, "a committee or board of religious education, which shall have general oversight of all the educational activities of the church."² A commission of the Religious Education Association reported at Cleveland, March, 1913, a comprehensive plan for the

¹ "There should be organized a school of the church, which should embrace the supervision and unification of all the educational activities within the congregation. The present Sunday School is a most important member of the church school, but it is not the whole of it, nor is it independent of the other members." *Minutes, General Assembly*, 1909, p. 106; also *Religious Education*, Oct., 1909, p. 381.

² *Religious Education*, June 1910, p. 140.

organization and administration of the church school; and the book which followed under that name, written by the commission's chairman, Professor Walter S. Athearn, made the title and concept still more familiar. For years however "church school" was to many simply a better-sounding name for the Sunday School; sometimes denoting a Sunday School, graded and in closer relations with its church.³

WEEKDAY RELIGIOUS TEACHING

Through the studies and discussions of these ten years, the need of the church for more school time than the Sunday session provided became increasingly clear. Graded lessons, with expanded subject-matter, memorizing, and calls for handwork and other expressive activities, made this need practical and widely felt. But relief was nowhere in sight. The natural recourse, as all the theorists had seen, was to the Sunday and weekday periods used by the other parish agencies; but to secure through these even an approximately correlated program proved beyond the power of ordinary parish leadership. To intrude upon church worship time seemed to most pastors little short of sacrilege. In early days two-hour sessions, or double sessions, morning and afternoon, had been common; but none ventured to propose to twentieth-century families so heroic a sacrifice of Sunday time. In vacation many families were away; and the "daily vacation Bible school," where existent, was usually a missionary effort, reaching but a fraction of the regular membership, and under a leadership as independent as that of the other auxiliaries. Afternoons and Saturdays belonged to play and home duties. The public schools, spurred by new ideals, and forced by college entrance boards and community calls to add to their already crowded curricula, claimed all their pupils' available weekday time. New Sunday School ideals

³ As in the title of my *Church-School Administration*.

were thus effervescing inside a time limit container that none as yet saw how to expand.

Seeking an adequate basis for an American system of religious education, and turning in despair from the church and its limited franchises for this work, many earnest souls in the decade from 1904 to 1914 sought relief through the agency, direct or indirect, of the public school. Then and earlier, some schools reduced their objective to the recognition of the Bible as a common religious book, and aimed to secure its use in the school's opening exercises. A plan was developed in 1911 in North Dakota, and in Colorado, to grant credit in high school and college for Bible study pursued in church or synagogue or at home. The North Dakota plan included, but the Colorado plan excluded, control of the academic quality of the work done.⁴ For some years both these plans had considerable vogue; but neither met the needs of religious education. One man alone dared to challenge the church to set up a weekday school, and the school to divide with the church its weekday time; but the schools and their rulers did not notice him, and the churches either indulged him as a harmless visionary or opposed his plan as impracticable.

This prophet of the weekday religious school was a Lutheran pastor of New York, the Rev. George U. Wenner, D.D. After many years of experience in the conduct of a catechetical school in his parish, using the children's free time, he presented his novel proposal in November, 1905, to the Interchurch Conference in Carnegie Hall, New York, where steps were taken that resulted, three years later, in the first quadrennial meeting of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. The New York conference at his instance resolved: "That in the need of more systematic education in re-

⁴ J. K. Jackson, and C. F. Malmberg, *Religious Education and the State*; C. A. Wood, *School and College Credit for Outside Bible Study*.

ligion, we recommend for the favorable consideration of the public school authorities of the country the proposal to allow the children to absent themselves without detriment from the public schools on Wednesday or on some other afternoon of the school week for the purpose of attending religious instruction in their own churches; and we urge upon the churches the advisability of availing themselves of the opportunity so granted to give such instruction in addition to that given on Sunday."

This action provoked some editorial discussion, mostly unfavorable. Dr. Wenner followed this with a book giving the history and practice of church catechizing, his own methods, and a defense of his plea for released school time.⁵ To the Federal Council meeting in Philadelphia in 1908 he further presented the idea, securing resolutions of moderate approval. Nothing was done. Churches and pastors were unprepared to face the task, either singly or together; the problem of uniting Catholics, Jews, and non-religionists in common action with Protestants had not even been discussed; and until such full unity, backed with a purpose and a plan, was at least on its way, the public school authorities had no proposition before them to consider.

It was in the new industrial city of Gary, Indiana, that Dr. Wenner's dream found its experimental development and its national start. This was made possible by the unique school system established in 1900 by William A. Wirt at Blucton, Indiana, and in 1907 applied by him to the Gary public schools. By this system the pupils' time, Monday to Friday, from a quarter after eight to a quarter after four, was taken over by the school and apportioned in hour units between hard studies, light studies, audience time, and play. Mr. Wirt's curricular plans embraced every pupil interest but religion. In the fall of 1913, with the coöperation of

⁵ *Religious Education and the Public School: an American Problem.*

the Methodist pastor, Dr. J. M. Avann, he called together the pastors of Gary and offered them two hours a week of the children's audience time, if their churches would provide religious instruction for such of these children as the parents might wish to have attend the church's religious classes. The pastors accepted the challenge. A beginning was made in the spring of 1914; and the following October saw nine churches and synagogues taking advantage of Superintendent Wirt's offer. Denominational overhead bodies at once recognized the high experimental significance of this step; and in most cases the local work for the first years was made possible through their subsidies and was supervised by their representatives.⁶

The ideal already voiced by Dr. Wenner, and shared by these denominational agencies, was that of each church separately teaching its own children; a natural outgrowth of the spirit and traditions of modern Protestantism. For the first three years the Gary teachers, with their pastors, loyally tried to realize this ideal. But, as these teachers told me when in April, 1915, I met them in conference, they could do far better if organized as a faculty of one school; and they found their churches inconveniently located with reference to pupil movement between the three city school buildings, their classrooms, and the homes. They were also handling independently much instruction that could as well or better be taught in common. Later experience led some of the leaders to the further realization that the crying and tragic need lay not with the already religious but insufficient programs of the churches for the church children, but rather with the wholly irreligious program of the schools for the community's children. The logical answer to this need was evidently a school, or a system

⁶ See a full report by Arlo A. Brown, "The Weekday Church Schools of Gary, Indiana," in *Religious Education*, Feb., 1916; also his *History of Religious Education in Recent Times*, p. 206.

of schools, church-supported and church-controlled, to parallel the city schools with such religious teaching as would reach all or nearly all the city's children with commonly accepted Christian truth and life. If this were done, each church might add, within its limits of Sunday and free time, whatever specific teaching and experience it desired to impart.

In the summer of 1917, therefore, five Gary churches and a settlement house united to form a city board of religious education for general coöperation, its immediate task being to organize and conduct a city system of Christian religious schools. Two churches continued their separate weekday classes, being satisfied with the method and its results. The board's schools found their needed support, rapidly grew, developed their own curricula, and showed results in pupil-reaction that made them a generally approved community institution.⁷ In 1918, at Van Wert, Ohio, under a Gary-trained teacher and with released time, a like system was established, which has proved so successful that since 1923 the school board has permitted the religious classes to be held in the classrooms of the public schools. Work covers the first eight grades, in the first six of which attendance reaches ninety-eight per cent of that in the public school. Since 1924 work has been extended into the county.⁸

Weekday religious teaching, single church and co-operative, has been widely undertaken in North America, arousing interest, discussion, publication, and theoretical inclusion in church school plans far beyond actual installation and successful operation. Though the weekday church school has been Internationally standardized, so much weekday teaching on non-standard levels is given in so many churches that reliable and intelligible statistics could not be secured. State attitude toward the

⁷ *Religious Education*, Oct., 1918, p. 338; Aug., 1919, p. 276.

⁸ Reported by Miss May K. Cowles, Director, for school year 1927-28.

release of school time for religious teaching varies widely, and is so largely adverse, that where such instruction is given it is usually in periods borrowed from the children's playtime. Extension of church school time into the day school week, seen in 1905 as vital and in 1914 espoused as a cause, thus appears in the light of American experience as possible for some churches, impossible for others without trespass on child rights, available where these can be satisfactorily adjusted, and capable of being made socially adequate and educationally effective only through inter-church coöperation, community approval, and the permission of the state's law and its educational administration.

That form of weekday religious instruction which avoids conflict with public-school claims by using vacation time has already been historically traced in Chapter VII. The vacation church school, with a wealth of curricular material now available, an International standard, general cognizance, a wide installation, and growing recognition of its educational and religious values to regular church school pupils no less than to those otherwise unreached, forms an important part of the church's present educational franchise.

Another available educational opening for the church into the school week, with limited present prospect of conflict, is in the field of nursery and kindergarten instruction. It is fifty years since a Methodist pastor's wife, Mrs. Mary J. Chisholm Foster, at a Sunday School convention in Lowell, Massachusetts, pointed church workers to the kindergarten, with the deeply religious lessons devised for it by Froebel, as an open and fruitful field for church school expansion. Later, after successful experimentation at the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Amsterdam, New York, she published her proposal in detail.⁹ It received little serious attention, then or since. I recall well how impracticable the lady's con-

⁹ *The Kindergarten of the Church.*

vention suggestions sounded to me, who, like my contemporaries, had not yet begun to think of religious teaching in weekday terms. Today, even with the growing inclusion of kindergarten in city school systems, Mrs. Foster's plan of a free, church-supported kindergarten sets before the missionary-minded church, which is able to procure the service, an open door for groundwork in Christian character formation. Below the kindergarten age, cradle-roll work, now called nursery work, in 1915 added, as a standard feature, a class of three-year-olds, gathered usually at the hour of church service and led in the simple "object lessons" and talks on home life provided in Miss Danielson's book and set of picture blocks.¹⁰ The nursery class, in public and church school work, has since become a recognized method, with a growing literature and clientele.

THE SCHOOL-CONSCIOUS CHURCH

Communal and statutory inhibitions on the use of weekday school time form but a minor obstacle to the development of the fully functioning church school. Much more serious and fundamental is the lack or weakness in the church and its congregation of the consciousness that it has a school and is responsible for that school's efficient and spiritually fruitful operation.

Marvelous progress has been registered since those years when the brave laymen of the early Sunday School unions and their ministerial supporters faced the indifferent or hostile churches and pastors, and secured the recognition and adoption of the Sunday School as an arm of the church. As an enterprise originally quite independent of church initiative or countenance, the newly adopted child did not take kindly to control by the church authorities and, in spite of ecclesiastical provisions, has maintained some features of its old status.

¹⁰ Frances W. Danielson, *Object Lessons for the Cradle Roll*.

An interesting case of such early reluctance is this from the files of the old First Reformed (Dutch) Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey, which has a tradition of Sunday School work begun by two of its godly women in 1799, and a recorded Sunday School history since 1817: The Rev. John B. Thompson, D.D., of Trenton, relates the following: Rev. Dr. How, pastor from 1832 to 1861, told me the Sunday School in his church at New Brunswick was at one time a voluntary organization, independent of the church, and difference of opinion existed among the teachers (I think respecting the choice of a superintendent), and it dwindled almost to nothing. When the superintendent asked him for advice concerning the upbuilding of the Sunday School, urging that it would die, Dr. How said, "Let it die." After a few weeks the consistory adopted a constitution for the Sunday School of the church, with a clause stating that the signers were willing to become teachers under the direction of the consistory, with a superintendent appointed by that authority. A respectable company met on the afternoon of an appointed Sabbath: the pastor read the rules for the conduct of the school under their authority, and asked for signers. Some declared they would not be ruled over in that fashion, but others signed, and the next Lord's day the children were invited to come to the Sunday School in the afternoon. The teachers took charge of the classes and other teachers and scholars were added, and the evils of independency were eradicated from the church.¹¹

Any volunteer organization will need and may be expected to cherish its franchise of self-management against even the appearance of arbitrary rule. It is therefore not surprising to find even today, in a well-to-do and progressive state field, nine out of ten of the Sunday Schools financing their expenses without church

¹¹ Anniversary sermon of the pastor, Rev. P. T. Pockman, D.D., printed in the *New Brunswick Daily Fredonian*, May 22, 1899.

help.¹² This of course limits the school's budget to what the Sunday School company feels itself able to raise and so clips the wings of educational idealism. Even more serious a consequence is the indifference thereby fostered and perpetuated in the church toward its own educational responsibility and problem. Lack of congregational experience in facing and meeting the costs of religious education has proved, as we shall see, an effective obstacle to the establishment of the standard church school.

CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP

Whatever may be the wealth of its accumulated educational resources, no church can hope to have a school of Christian education in the functional sense, unless it can unite these resources under one leadership, effective in control, competent in sympathy, understanding, and judgment, professional in qualification, adequate in time and attention, and exemplary in character and religious life. This requirement, self-evident to any educator, the churches have largely ignored. Rarely have they shown such solicitude as did Dr. How at New Brunswick; and when they did they have until recent years taken for granted that the pastor and his official board were fully competent to unify and supervise the Sunday School and all else in pursuance of the church's aims and maintenance of its doctrinal and educational standards.

During the long period when no parish agency but the Sunday School was counted educational, it was natural also to count the superintendent the church's educational leader, the pastor sometimes coöperating and occasionally exercising control. In liturgical churches the Sunday School is viewed as an extension of the pastor's teaching office. As publishing and missionary boards, state and provincial Sunday School associations, and

¹² Reports from about half of the Sunday Schools of New Jersey for four years, 1928-32, gathered and compiled by me as statistical officer of the state council of religious education.

independent headquarters like that of Christian Endeavor developed their curricula and programs of parish work and injected these into the local fields, the leadership thus separately ministered was for many years gratefully received. But the new century brought with it a growing desire for parish educational unity, or at least a correlation of these local agencies, with elimination of conflict and overlap.

How this could be accomplished was long a puzzle. The early students of the church school idea recognized it as such. In 1910, as we have seen, the solution was definitely visioned. The pastor and church board must confess the claims of education in religion as a specialty requiring more time and attention, and usually more technical skill, than a leader and board charged with church responsibility as a whole is able to supply. Directly, or with congregational action, they must create a separate board, committee, or council, reporting to them, and empowered on behalf of the church to control, direct, unify, and upbuild all its educational activities. To this board, in addition to authority and freedom, they must furnish an acceptable and competent executive—the pastor or some other—to give time and exercise leadership under the board's direction and with its coöperation. When this has been done, it becomes possible to deal with holdover leadership and institutional loyalties, direct activities in the light of parish needs rather than of programs from outside headquarters, correlate each activity with the corresponding section of the Sunday School, and make progress on the basic task of establishing an all-inclusive, fully integrated, and completely planned church school.

This call for a church board of religious education has been reiterated by all later writers on church school administration, as a fundamental requirement of effective church school work. It has been emphasized that this board should be small. The suggestions clearly

imply that each member should represent the educational interest and responsibility of the church as a whole; special and ex-officio representation, as by presidents of organizations, belonging rather in executive cabinets or the general workers' conference. The board, as Athearn remarks,¹³ must take itself seriously, informing itself as to modern standards, comparing these with ascertained local conditions, and forming a definite educational program for the church. It must proceed to inform the church as to conditions discovered, present its program, and seek to win the church in advance to full support of each new step undertaken. The program thus planned and announced, it must proceed vigorously to execute. In the words of Athearn, "It will take the educational work of the church into its own hands and make whatever changes may be necessary to secure an efficient school." If the last ten years' progress in church school development has been disappointing, as some observers feel, it may be due in part to the reluctance of churches to establish this feature of centralized leadership, or their failure to find the right board members, or their hasty employment of an educational executive before a responsible board has adopted and is prepared to sustain a program for the leader to execute.

PROFESSIONAL DIRECTION

Following the creation within the church of a central agency for educational control and promotion, comes the step of supplying to this lay board or committee a professional or semi-professional executive, usually called the director of religious education. By semi-professional church school service is here meant that which (a) devotes to its task a definite and adequate measure of marginal time, (b) protects this against intrusion or diminution, (c) cherishes professional ideals, (d) evinces

¹³ *Organization and Administration of the Church School*, Lesson II.

to some extent professional attainments and qualifications, and (e) submits its product to professional tests. With service of substantially this type, many of the gains of professional direction, general or departmental, have been secured on thousands of local fields.

Since the beginning of the century the need for this has become increasingly clear. Without personal leadership competent both in religion and in education, the present church school standards of organization and administration cannot ordinarily be even undertaken; and without the full time service of this leader, the functions called for cannot be completely discharged. In some types of parish a minister educationally trained may supply this leadership; or the need may be met in whole or in part on an honorary basis or by group co-operation. But the day of satisfied dependence on the wisdom, zeal, and vigor of a lay Sunday School executive ought to be counted over and gone. The profession of director for the all-round work of the church school is now well established. As a final episode in this story of the Sunday School and its successor, let us trace by what steps the idea and features of this new religious profession reached their present form.

In June, 1889, I met on the *Bothnia*, on the way to the World's First Sunday School Convention, Marion Lawrance of Toledo, Ohio, and heard him tell in a deck lecture how he ran his already famous Washington Street Congregational Sunday School. Answering a question as to how he could do so much, he explained that friends of the work had recently made it possible for the church to employ him as superintendent on half time. Doubtless there were other like cases of service in those early days that in some respects approximated the work of a director.

On a visit to Kentucky in August, 1897, I saw, in the First Methodist Sunday School of Owensboro, in addition to the superintendent, an officer called the super-

visor. He was principal of the local public school. I watched him moving among the classes, overseeing the teaching, arranging for substitutes, and observing older pupils as possible candidates for the substitute corps and later for permanent class positions. This officer's service was voluntary. Like Mr. Lawrance, he may have represented like work going on in many Sunday Schools.

About 1901 a group of progressive pastors in and near New York, responding to the stimulus of Starbuck's *The Psychology of Religion* and Coe's *The Spiritual Life*, began to meet regularly, calling themselves "The Curriculum Conference." They were joined in 1902 by Dr. Richard Morse Hodge, just beginning work as director of extension courses at Union Theological Seminary and lecturer at Teachers' College of Columbia University. In his teaching syllabus Dr. Hodge outlined the essential tasks of a parish educational director, though he did not then visualize these tasks as performed or supervised by one directing officer.¹⁴ One pastor in the conference, the Rev. Milton S. Littlefield, secured Dr. Hodge's voluntary service as supervisor of the educational work in his church, the First Union Presbyterian Church of New York. Leadership was mainly in hand-work, notebook work, and the making of Bible maps. For two years Dr. Hodge thus acted substantially as director; and when in 1904 he withdrew, the joint work of director and pastor was carried on by Mr. Littlefield, who in three pastorates has continued the function if not the office of parish educational director.¹⁵

In November, 1905, the Rev. Daniel Dorchester,

¹⁴ *A Syllabus of Religious Education*. As usual at that period, emphasis was on content of instruction and class method; but a director of instruction and a board of control were clearly specified.

¹⁵ Correspondence with Dr. Littlefield; see also his *Hand-work in the Sunday School*, in which numerous illustrations show the types of work developed by Dr. Hodge and its author during the period described.

pastor of Christ Church, Methodist Episcopal, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, secured from his church board authority to add a new man to his staff. At Drew Seminary he found in James V. Thompson a teacher and school principal of several years' experience, who also qualified as a teacher of religion; and in January, 1906, Mr. Thompson began his work. The functions assigned him were the leadership of the Sunday School, the training of teachers, care of the Boys' Brigade, promotion of the Epworth League, and preaching in the pastor's absence. He was called at first "Sunday School and Young People's Assistant," later "Assistant Pastor." After two years' service he withdrew to seek more thorough educational preparation; and the church continued the work thus begun.

Another start, better known, was made three years later at Buffalo, New York. In 1907 the First Presbyterian Church of that city called as pastor the president of Union College, Dr. Andrew V. V. Raymond. In the fall of 1908 it sought for its pastor a colleague to carry the church's educational responsibility and build up its teaching work. It first approached Mr. Littlefield, whose book and other utterances had made him known as a representative of the type of leadership desired. As he felt unable to accept, it sought elsewhere; and early in 1909 it called from his parish in Bayonne, New Jersey, the Rev. William H. Boocock. In close partnership with the pastor and a fine lay force, and with ample financial support, Mr. Boocock developed the lines of a rich and effective ministry of religious education, which became a guide and stimulus to many churches. In 1913, at the Cleveland convention of the Religious Education Association, a dozen or more of the early directors met under Dr. Boocock's lead and formed a professional association, perfected at the New Haven convention of the following year.¹⁶

¹⁶ In a statement prepared by a committee at this meeting to

ADAPTED HOUSING

When the primary Sunday School teachers, at and before 1900, began their long struggle for a departmentalized children's division and a graded elementary curriculum, they faced, as part of their movement's resistance, the Akron type of architecture. For a generation this had been, for all new church construction, the last word in Sunday School housing. During some years the criticisms and appeals of the departmentally minded leaders in the International fellowship made little impression. Expensive plants, embodying in all essentials the old separate-together principle, continued to multiply. But as more influential leaders found their voice in the conventions of the Religious Education Association and elsewhere, and as the outlines of the modern church school concept began to grow clear, the utter inappropriateness of a theater-shaped building to the needs of a school was steadily forced on the churches' attention; and here and there appeared parish houses and church-school plants erected on the model not of the theater but of the high school. As these were tried out, found successful, and described in current literature, the new ideal gradually took the place of the old.¹⁷

To build a satisfactory church school house, however, proved a puzzle. The church was ready to agree that the building should properly house the school's work; that where possible without loss of school efficiency, its rooms should be adapted and available for other uses; and that in any conflict thus arising, school need should come first. It was what that coming school work should

define the new profession it is stated: "At present there are more than eighty persons who are engaged in this service, and the number is rapidly growing." *Religious Education*, Aug., 1913, p. 303.

¹⁷ Athearn's *The Church School*, frontispiece, shows the plan of one of these early church-school buildings, erected for the Congregational Church at Winnetka, Ill., under the lead of J. W. F. Davies, a pioneer director of religious education.

be that constituted the problem. Older teachers, like the church officers and the influential contributors, saw the Sunday School of the past. The professional adviser saw and sought to plan the church school of the future. The working staff was sure of little except that it wanted something different from what it had. There was no such simplifying standardization of plans and specifications as has characterized the architecture of the public school.

The history of the Sunday School explains this confusion. Like Drummond's hermit-crab,¹⁸ it is the atrophied victim of its borrowed housing. Admitted to church connection, it found itself in a meeting house with pulpit, pews, and gallery, and so developed mass work from the platform as half of its activity. The infant class used the gallery; and the trying period of separate and conflicting worship programs was made as short as possible. Amateur teachers learned how many children, pew-seated, could be taught and controlled; while in the church room or the broad basement below the superintendent learned that when a class outgrew a limit of six or eight, its behavior and its teacher's raised voice tended to annoy the classes adjoining. These inherited architectural conditions fixed for the Sunday School a norm of sessional procedure and class structure that was carried over into the uniform lesson era, became in the new Akron buildings still further stereotyped, and is embodied in some of the church school structures being erected today. For a church school company, emancipating itself from these traditions, to solve the indeterminate equation of what that school would be like in an ideal building, and what the building would be like that should fit this ideal school, is an achievement not often seen.

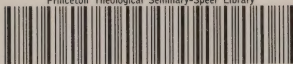
One of the accomplishments of that ill-fated enter-

¹⁸ *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, chapter on "Semi-parasitism."

prise, the Interchurch World Movement of 1919 and 1920, was the creation, by a commission under the direction of Dr. Athearn, of a thousand-point standard for city church school plants, with a detailed account of its application in appraisal of the seventeen church and Sunday School buildings of Malden, Massachusetts.¹⁹ To revise this standard in the light of later experience, publication, and study, adapt it, as was originally planned, to rural as well as city conditions, and utilize it in the guiding of the churches' architectural search for their yet unreached ideals, would form a project fitly crowning the beneficent researches and leadership of the International Council.

To those in the midst of church school construction today, the progress of the past ten years may seem phenomenal. The story which here comes to a close, however, reveals that in other eras the advance over prior conditions has also seemed phenomenal. Leaders of religious education have moved rapidly and learned much. They have established the church school as a concept, defined its aims and relationships, standardized its form and procedure, and made a small beginning in the realization of their new vision in the life of the church. They have much to learn and some things, undoubtedly, to unlearn; while statistically "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." With courage befitting successors of the pioneers, wisdom to draw from the past encouragement for the innovator and warning lest today's achievement prove tomorrow's obstacle, and faith in the transforming power of God's laws of learning and Christ's ideal of life, let those who must live and write the further story of the Sunday School and its successor proceed upon their uncharted way.

¹⁹ W. S. Athearn (Editor), *The Malden Survey*.



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